FANTASTIC FANZINE 10

PACIFIC
STARS AND STRIPES

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Capt. America In Vietnam Mission

CAP SHOWS VICTORY "V" DURING ARRIVAL AT DANANG ABOARD RESCUE HELICOPTER.

DANANG (AP)--Flashing a big grin and waving a triumphant "V" for victory, a living legend stepped from an Air Force helicopter at this war-torn Vietnamese city today and was given a thunderous welcome from thousands of cheering GIs. Captain America, the famed red-white-and-blue Avenger, was airlifted back to friendly territory here after successfully completing a hair-raising mission into North Vietnam which involved the destruction of a super-secret weapons test and development lab where the NVA was reputed to have been perfecting a fantastic new weapon, which they planned to rush into use against American forces.

"I can't talk about the mission," Cap told the crowd of well-wishers and hero-worshippers, "but it was a hairy one and I was just lucky to make it. I'm glad to be back among friendly faces."

(Continued page 10, col. 4)

Club Memo's "F.F." NO. 10

Editorial Page,

Written By Editor Gary G. Groth

HEADQUARTERS:

7263 Evanston Road, Springfield Virginia 22150

Never thoughtwe'd make it did you? Well, here we are. With our 10th great issue. This is no doubt our best issue yet, with the best art any fanzine could possibly have.

Of special importance is this: The National Comics Society and my own FF have embarked to produce a fanzine entitled the "FF-NCS SPEC -IAL". This 'zine has 40 xeroxed pages, an offset cover, with work by Tom Crawford, Bill Cantey, Gary R. Spiewak, Jay Owens, Navis Car -lisle, and ye old editor, Gary Groth. All this for only 75¢.Please order early to insure you of getting a copy.

A new trend has been started in "FF DOM": that being all the pro -- fessional contributions we have and will be getting. In this issue alone, we have a cover by JIM STERANKO (possibly the best looking piece of work ever printed by Jim in fandom), and spot illustrat -- ions by BARRY SMITH, BILL EVERETT, AND NEAL ADAMS. Thanks to Ron Sutton for inking and sending us the above illo of Cyclops by Neal. The artwork by Bill Everett and JIM STERANKO were gotten at the comic con. In future issues, you can look forward to 3 more covers by Jim, one, fully inked cover of the SILVER SURFER by Barry Smith, a wrap-around cover of The Silver Surfer battling the Vision by Dave Cockrum, Interviews with pro's, including, an in-depth, personal interview with Jim Steranko, and possibly a MR. A Strip by Steve Ditko, spot illo's by Jack Kirby, Barry Smith and Dick Giordano. At the Comic Convention, NEAL ADAMS and JOHN BUSCEMA were so impressed by FF 8*9, they said that "when they get around to it" they would do me "something" (hopefully, cover illustrations). SO LOOK FOR BIG THINGS COMING UP IN "FANTASTIC FANZINE".

The FF's art staff is growing with each issue: With John G. Fantucc -hio, Dave Cockrum, Al Grinage, and Barry Smith heading the list, we welcome: William Black, Jeff Rinehart, Dave Russell, Dave Transue, Doug Hazlewood, and Jay Mike. Examples of most of these artists - work appears in this issue -- The Captain America to the right was done by Jay Mike, the Mephisto illustration decorating The continua- ation of Tony Isabella's column was done by Jeff Rinehart, and the Fandral the Dashing illustration decorating the continuation of Club Memo's is done by Doug Hazlewood. Look for their work in future is- sues. (The cover to the FF SPECIAL # 1 is done by Jay Mike!!

Instead of the normal 2 month wait between issues, there will be a 3-3½ month wait between FF 10 and FF SPECIAL # 1. Also, because of the upcoming school year, after school work, and other activities, FF might have to become a quarterly publication instead of a bi-mon -thly one.

Apoligies? Yes, we have some of those, this issue. In one of my ads (In the RB*CC), I stated that there would be an in-depth report on the 1969 Comic Convention, which I attended and thoroughly enjoyed, but after "finishing the ish up", I didn't have any room left. A brief report on the convention with around 20 pictures taken at the convention.

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Dave Sockrum

An Interview With Dave Cockrum!

F.F.: Well, Dave, since this interview will be reaching about 800 fans, let's get right into your views on Fandom. --When did you first become interested in fanzines and Fandom, and how did you discover them?

Dave: The first time I ever saw a fanzine, I think was nearly ten years ago; I got a complimentary copy of some 'zine (I can't recall after all this time what the name was, even) because I had a let-ter printed in a comic 'mag. The 'zine was in ditto and the art was at best mediocre, but still it caught my imagination. Suddenly I realized that there was an outlet for amatuer artists to put their work into print for other people to read and see, and I wanted to join up. Unfortu--natley, the 'zine disappeared before I could write to the editor. I think it was burned with one of my many hoard of comics (my folks burned 'em, as fast as I could stash'em.) After that, I heard nothing more about fanzines for several years, & it wasn't until about three years ago that another opportunity came along for me to affiliate with one.

F.F.: What was the first fanzine to feature your fantastic work, and how was it that this was the first fanzine you discovered or decided to work for?

Dave: Another printed letter did it. I had an LOC printed in Fantastic Four and something in it sparked Steve Ziegler of the late YSG to send me a complimentary copy. I sent in a sub & a batch of art, and asked if YSG could use my stuff. That was sometime in 1967, I think...I worked almost exclusively for YSG right up until it folded.

F.F.: While we're on the subject of fanzines, what do you think of the present number being publish-ed now?

Dave: I think the field is flooded with them!!! There are a number of outstanding or very good zines' out, with some real talent putting them out, but there are also a helluva lot of crud--zines' put out by people with little else but

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the urge to go into print. I'm not putting these kids down or anything -- it's a good thing for anyone to try to express himself in a creative fashion, it's a good outlet for spare time and energy -- but if some of the people putting out some of these little 'zines, would instead go to work to upgrade the quality of some of the good ones, I think you'd see a lot more really good fanzines!! Not as many as there are not -- but much better in quality.

F.F.: Currently, what are your favorite fanzines and which one -s do you contribute to?
Dave: My base of operations, so to speak is Ron Kraus's ENTER - PRISE MONTHLY. Though, a fairly new 'zine, it's one of my fav - orites. I think GRAPHIC STORY ILLUSTRATED is a damn fine zine --one of the best, though I don't contribute to it. I like Alan Hanley's COMIC BOOK & have done a seven-page superhero strip for it, but it might wind up in the pages of ENTERPRISE MONTHLY, for all I know, since Ron Kraus bought Hanley out and is now Publishing CB for him!!! Besides YSG and FF, I've con -- tributed to COMICOLIGY, had a sort of portfolio (not my best work) in STAR STUDDED COMICS, & am preparing a strip for STAR STUDDED that may or may not be finished in the near future. I al- so contribute to a lot of 'zines dedicated to Heroic Fantasy -- specifically Edgar Rice Burr- oughs and Robert E. Howard fiction -- & of those my favorite is Paul Allens' BARSOOMIAN. Paul has a huge collection of my ERB work but so far none of its been printed due to the length of time be -tween issue's. Further, his next issue has been laid out around the motion pictures Tarzans, so it'll be quite a while before any of my work does get printed, unless his plans to reprint old issues with new art are realized. I've also contributed to ERB-DOM and AMRA, but nothing has been printed yet. I'm a relatively new member in The Swords-&-Sorcery-Fanzine ranks. My favorite 'zine of all, though it can't be classed as a fanzine as such, is WITZEND. There is a damn fine magazine. It's exactly the sort of thing I'd like to do myself if I get established someday - a medium where comics pro's, normally limited by the Comics Code, can do exactly what they want!! And they all do it well.

F.F.: Dave, just what do you look for in a fan - zine? What I mean is, what is it that arouses your interest in a particular fanzine?
Dave: The contents. (my wife told me not to say that, but I couldn't resist the temptation.....) Seriously, I look for good art first of all. As an artist myself, I enjoy looking at good work!! Second, since I prefer strips, I look for these. I look for good plots and lots of action. If there are articles, fan fiction, I look for cur- rent, pertinent, well-written work from someone who has something to say. Junk articles & critic columns on the latest issues of comics, I have no use for; I'm capable of do- ing my own criticising. I know whether or not I liked the lat -est issue of the incredible - Onion-Man, if I read it, & if I didn't read it, the critic's column is useless, because by the time it's printed, that iss -ue of Onion-Man is no longer on the stands.

F.F.: How do you feel about your work in the Yancy Street Gazette as compared to your work today?
Dave: Poor. At the time, I thou -ght it was good, of course but I don't any longer. I try to keep my work constantly im- proving, because I can sit down and show you half-a-dozen weak points in any piece of art I turn out. I want to get rid of these weak spots. One thing I lack is polish. I just don't think my stuff looks pro -fessional. Maybe that's be - cause I know who did it, though. I'm a lot better than I was in the YSG days, but still have much room for improvement. One hangup I have is that I'll lay out a sketch and get ready to make a smooth of it, and then I'll think: "Wait a minute now. That's an awful damn conven- tional-looking sketch. You sure you can't come up with some- thing better than that?" And then I'll stop and think it o- ver, and turn on my imagina -- tion. That's my problem. I'm a conventional artist, unless I consciously turn on my imagination. That's the way I felt about that center-spread I did in FF # 8*9. It wasn't bad, but after I finished it, I realized I for - got to turn on my imagination. It could have been so much better, but I didn't think of it. My best work to date is the ERB stuff that Paul Al- len has. I don't use zip-a-tone when I do ERB illo's, for one thing, and they look more like book illo's -- which is the effect I want --- or old, crusty, pulp mag illo's.

F.F.: When did you first become interested in drawing, and what did you learn to draw first?
Dave: I think I first started drawing when I discovered that one end of a pencil makes a fun- ny mark on paper. I'd guess the first things I tried to draw were Bugs Bunny (from old Loony Toons and Merry Melodies sub I had), Gene Autry (from Gene Autry Adventure books) and monsters!! I even oil painted monsters (pretty badly, I might add.) You know how kids are. I got pretty good at the monsters. Later on I switched to sup -er-heroes; I dearly loved the Original Captain Marvel and the Marvel Family, and used to draw them. I never was very good at it, though.

F.F.: Did you ever attend any sort of art achool?
Dave: I took as much art as was allowed in high school, then majored in it for nearly three year -s at Southern Illinois University and Colorado State U. Unfortunatley, I got tired of college & joined the Navy for (haw) adventure; after I was out of college for a while I realized that I must've never really listened in class, because I knew next to nothing about art --- especially human anatomy. I went out and bought several art

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Interview Continued.....

books, including an encyclopedia on anatomy, & sat down every night after work to do some homework. Basically, that's what I'm still doing. But most of what I know is self -- taught since leaving school. A course of action,which I definitley do not recommend.

F.F.: Let's get to an easy question for a chan-ge of pace--where and when were you born?
Dave: Pandleton, Oregon, on November 11th, 1943. A good date, that.

F.F.: Now what about the comics of today - say compared to those of yesteryear?
Dave: That's a loaded question.Whatever I say I'm liable to insult somebody. However;there's no question, but that today's comics are far superior in quality of art and story, and in general appearance. Unfortunatley, though, I have the same sense of nostolgia for old com-ics that older collectors than I have toward the comics of the 40's. Even though I know the stories were silly, in fact sometimes down -- right stupid, I still think that Captain Marvel was the greatest superhero ever printed.

F.F.: Are there any other fields besides com-ics that particularly interest you?
Dave: Definitley. I'd like to try my hand at book illustration, for instance; Sci-Fi & fantasy covers & interior art, like the work put out by Frank Frazetta, Roy Krenkel & Jeff Jone-s. I'd also like to someday try out an idea I have for a daily newspaper strip, time per-mitting. I've had the idea laid out for several years now; it's a sci-fi strip called "Ga-lactic Agent" and it involves several people who are special operatives for the Office Of Naval Intelligence, five or six hundred years in the future. I'd also like to do some writ-ing. I have several plots in various stages of non-completion, all sci-fi or fantasy, just waiting to be finished if I ever get the time. I think they're pretty readable, but I'll have to get them finished and into a publisher to find out.

F.F.: Have you ever considered going into the comic field? Do you plan to, sometime in the future?
Dave: If I didn't, I'd be finishing up those plots right now and getting them into the prin-ters. Yes, I hope to go pro when I get out of the Navy. That'll be in September of 1970!! I enjoy drawing comics more than almost anything else I can think of, and if I can break into the field I'm definitley going pro. My work can still be improved but I have more than a year to goand I'm constantly working at it.

F.F.: Are there any people in the comics field who have infuenced your work?
Dave: Hah. It'd be easier to name the people who haven't, then all the people who have. At one time or another I've been infuenced by Gil Kane, Frank Frazetta, Wally Wood, Jack Kirby, Al Williamson, Carmine Infantino, Will Eisner. Neal Adams, Joe Kubert, Mike Sekowsky.....I could go on indefinitely. I'd say that Frazetta, Kane, Adams, and John Buscema have had the greatest infuence on my work.

F.F.: Everybody has his favorite artist(s) and writer(s) in the comic field. Who are yours?

Dave: I'll have to qualify my answer a bit. I have several favorites, for several reasons. My topmost, super-favorite artist is Frank Frazetta, and of course, he doesn't do much in the comics field any more. I'm also quite fond of Will Eisner because of the way he creates an at-mosphere almost without trying -- but again, he's not very active any more. I'm nuts about Hal Foster -- I think Prince Valiant is the best comics medium work in existence. As far as comic books themselves go, I think I'd have to pick Neal Adams as my current, contemporary fav-orite. In fact, I even like the way he writes. (I understand a lot of people don't). I guess I'd have to pick Joe Kubert, John Buscema, and Jim Steranko as close seconds. For writers, I'd have to say either Denny O'Neil or Gary Friedrich; Gardiner Fox is pretty good, too, when he is doing Sci-Fi. This new "Nightmaster" strip O'Neil writes for DC is outstanding S&S,I think.

F.F.: Let's get into your artwork now, Dave: -- Could you explain a little of the technique you use in your pencilling and inking?
Dave: Haphazard. Personally, I think my pencils are better than my inks. I get a lot more character and subtle chading into the pencils than finally comes out in ink. Basically, I guess I just start out with an idea and kind of quick-sketch it to see what it looks like, then alter it as more ideas come along. I frequesntly trace a sketch several times with variations, to see which one I like best. When doing a strip, I can't do that, of course -- too time consuming and it wastes paper. And, I use a lot of opaque white poster paint to cover up mis-takes ot to change something after I've "Turned On My Imagination."

F.F.: What materials do you generally use in your inking?
Dave: A small, pointed brush (usually # 1, 2 or 3, although I know most pro's use larger ones) and sometimes a crow-quill pen for lighter shad-ing. I like Pelikan ink, but when you're sta-

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DAVE COCKRUM CONTINUED....

-tioned on Gaum, you take what you can get.

F.F.: How's your working speed, Dave?
Dave: Lousy. If I was doing it as a regular job, I think I'd be able to turn out a good a-mount of work on a reasonable schedule, but, when you're married to the Navy for 24 hours a day and have a wife and son who like a little attention now and then, it takes up most of the day. I don't get much time for drawing,and have a helluva time meeting deadlines.

F.F.: Who do you consider to be the best FAN-artist?
Dave: John Fantucchio. The only guy who's close is Vaugn Bode; his war strips are outstanding!. I've heard that Fantucchio is working on a strip himself, though, and if it's as good as his posters and single illos, it ought to be fantastic. But then, he takes a lot more troub-le in his work than a pro artist could afford to. Too time-consuming.

F.F.: What company, in your opinion, is the best all-around company?
Dave: I'm going to have to hedge a bit here, and even so I'll probably make more enemies. I don't think any of the companies are good all-around companies. All of them have some glar-ing faults and some outstanding good points. Mar-vel's stories have more impact and contemporary social significance; they're not afraid to take a stand...but sometimes they carry it to the poi-nt where it's like a kid waving flags & shriek-ing, "Look at me ma --'I'm a crusader!"They blow there own horn a lot. Besides, Stan Lee's hip-ness and glib wisecracks leave me cold. D.C., on the other hand, seem's very reluctant to even mention the issues of the day, more often than not, and when they do, their stories seem rather weak and contrived. This isn't always the case, but it's a prevalent characteristic. Not,I think they've been trying hard to please the fans of late -- much more so than Marvel claims to - and they've turned out a lot of new features lately. Unfortunatley, I lot of them have gone bust too; like the Creeper, which I thought was one of the best new characters in years. I can't see what they're doing wrong -- except that they used the same damn villian over and over and the plot was always the same basic one. Their new NIGHTMAS-TER 'zine is a really exciting production, --- I think; I was dubious when they used a rock sing-er as their hero, but by the second issue I was sold. Anyone who likes Swords-&-Sorcery should eat it up. I also think, that DC has, for the most part, better artists -- although latley the the two companies seem to be swapping back and forth, what with Colletta at DC and Adams & Kane at Marvel. And, of course, DC has always looked slicker and more glossy than Marvel, but that seems to be what most people like about it!! It seems to be an underdog production. Tower and Charlton were good too, during their superhero phases; too bad about that. I think I'll just shut-up about the whole thing and say I read 'em all and appreciate 'em on their own merits.

F.F.: What, in your opinion is the best all-time strip ever published?
Dave: That's a tough choice, if you limit me to comic books. If I can include newspaper strips, there's no question at all. Prince Valiant. Any-one who's ever seen one page of Hal Fosters work would almost have to agree with me. If limited to comic books, I guess I'd have to say Will Eis-ner's Spirit. (I'm aware the Spirit was also in comic pages, all you people who thought you caught me goofing). Eisner has the ability to create, with just a few lines on paper, an en-tire, dark, gloomy world of alleys and back streets, overflowing trashcans and grimy streets -foul tenements and run-down flop-houses; with what seemed like very little effort on Eisner's part the Spirit ran through this horrid, evil un-derworld righting wrongs in a slightly unscroup-ulous fashion, and it was all portrayed so viv-idly that you looked now and then over your shoulder to see who was sneaking up on you.Real-ism per se' wasn't Eisner's bag; no normal human could survive some of the things the Spirit in-dured, and no city of human construction ever looked like the Spirit's Central City. Buildings sagged and twisted and became evil entities in themselves, using their brick and mortar to spell out the very name of the strip, like something out of a Dali nightmare. I've gotta say THE SPIR-IT was the best.

F.F.: I understand that you and your wife "met"

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WHY ARE OUR INTERVIES SO "!$%?&!." LONG?

because of a letter you wrote, printed in a Fantastic Four's letter page -- that started you corresponding -- and you finally met each other in 1966 and got married. Could you tell us a little more about it?

Dave: That's a long and tangled story, but I'll try to make it brief. I had a letter printed in an early FF --- # 36, I think, declaring that I thought it was about time Reed Richards & (then) Sue Storm got married. Andrea saw the letter & something about it tickled her curiosity!! She wrote me a short letter -- which followed me from one duty station to the next -- and I answered it. This started up a correspondence that lasted for about two and a half years, and during that time Andrea left home and went to Florida to work (her home is in New York; I was stationed in San Diego). Finally she decided to come out to California to meet me and we first met on the first of December, 1966, after a comedy of errors worthy of Laurel and Hardy(she came in on Continental Trailways, and I was waiting for her in the Greyhound Terminal. Fort-unatley, when she called my squadron, some of my friends were on duty there and they'd figured I done what I did, so they sent her over to the Greyhound station to look for me. I almost didn't recognize her from her pictures, because she streaked her hair with some silvery gunk -- something to do during the bus ride -- and my first thought was 'that little old lady looks familair'.). Anyway, about ten days later, we eloped to Las Vegas. I've never had any reason to regret it.

F.F.: How does artwork fit into your Navy Career?

Dave: Miserably. In the first place, The Navy naturally takes up most of my time. I have to scratch for time to do my artwork even in off-duty hours. Then, about once a week, somebody comes into the office with a request for a cumshaw art project (cumshaw is Navy slang for "under the table" or "midnight requisitioning"--) they want me to do it in my off duty hours.More often than not, it's an officer and how do you tell an officer -- "stick it in your ear, sir"? Also, I do a monthly comic strip for the ship's newspaper; it's called "Bubblehead", a typical "Beetle Baileyish" strip about life aboard a submarine tender. "Bubblehead" is a Navy term for sailors aboard Polaris submarines (Bubble-Machines). I suppose every guy with an artistic ability who was ever in the service has to put up with the same thing. Funny,-though -- nobody wants to pay for it. They all think it comes under your Navy duties.

F.F.: EDITORS NOTE: The Next question, readers was directed toward Daves wife, Andrea Cockrum --this is, to my knowledge at least, the only Interview where the last question was answered by a person's wife. Alright, Mrs. Cockrum, --- could you tell us what kind of a guy, Dave really is? (we could've asked Dave, but he might have been a bit prejudiced...)

Andrea: Dave is a fairly quiet, easygoing guy who know's some of the world's worst puns & is totally dedicated to his artwork. When a guy's six-month-old son crawls around in a superhero costume, that's dedication. (Our boy isn't six any more -- that was quite a while ago). Dave doesn't beat his wife or molest his neighbors' children, and is very kind to animals. His favorites being snakes and warty old toads. He has, what is politely known as "robust appetite" (meaning, he eats like a horse) and threatens to clean out the refrigerator several times a day -- between meals. And all that is about as close to the truth as I can get without being clobbered. All in all, he's a better-than-average husband and father and I kinda like him...just a personal opinion of course.

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And there it is!! The first Interview with Dave to be printed in any Fanzine. No doubt, that when Dave turns pro, he'll be swamped with requests for Interviews and I'm only happy that FF was the first to get one. This Interview, I believe rival's our history making Sal Buscema interview, which many of you readers thought was "the best Interview" you ever read. BUT remember, it wouldn't have been one quarter as good and in-depth as it was, if not for Sal's interest in making it such. I thank Dave (and his wife) for doing such a good job on this one.

THE SEARCH

BY ROBERT KOWALSKI

CHAPTER III

When his twin brother is reported killed in an auto accident, and it is learned that the car had been tampered with, Dr. David Bryant becomes the billy-club wielding hero known as CRIMESMASHER to carry on where the police investigation left off. That was in 1966. Tye Search for his brothers killers is still the motivating force behind his campaign to smash crime wherever and whenever he finds it! It has led him to team up with THE MASK and together they now follor the trail of their prime suspect: the mysterious leader of an underworld organization known to his men only as CRIMEMASTER.

The Time: 1968

The Place: A warehouse in Centerline

The Event: A meeting between the MASK and an underworld tipster who may be the key to breaking CRIMEMASTER's grip on the city.

As the two confer within the huge edifice, they fail to see a movement in the shadows. A small explosion is their first warning that they are under fire. One of the figures falls lifeless to the floor,a small hole in the middle of his forehead. THE MASK, sensing that his companion is beyond help, rolls for cover!! Coming up behind some crates, he draws his .38 from its shoulder houlster and returns fire. The sound of a door slamming indicates that his attacker has departed.

Our scene switches to CRIMESMASHER as he enters the first location on the list he and his partner found on their last raid, a list they believe shows the location of every criminal cell operated by CRIMEMASTER. No sooner is he inside, then the lights come on and the green gladiator finds himself facing a trio of hoods with an equal amount of guns aimed his way.

"So this whole thing was a set-up. That list we found was a phoney that CRIMEMASTER hoped would get us to walk into a trap!"

"That's right, ya' costumed clown. And it looks like you fell for it. Your career is gonna' end right here. You're gonna' die CRIMEMASTER!"

"Not if my partner has anything to say about it --get them, MASK!"

As the killers whirl to look behind the, CRIMESMASHER throws his billy-club at one of the hoods and leaps toward the others even as it makes contact. A few well-placed blows and his antagonists are out for the count.

"I didn't think they'd fall for that old trick but I'm mighty glad they did. I'd better contact Jim and warn him about the list."

Back at Carter House a little later, the two heroes, in their everyday identities as millionaire James Peters and David Bryant, exchange info and make some observations.

"From what those goons told me, I gather that CRIMEMASTER has put a contract out on us. That list was supposed to make it easier for his men to find us. In fact, we'd come to them!"

Right, Dave. And that ties in with what happened to me. That tipster didn't tell me anything we don't already know. My hunch is that the bullet which killed him was meant for me, but I moved at the right time and it bypassed and killed him."

"So, it's open season on costumes heroes, is it? Well, this is one target that's going to fight back.

"We'll have to watch our step from now on,Dave. We'll be targets for every two-bit hood with a gun once the word goes out. It looks as though the hunter has become the hunted. I have a feeling we're going to learn what it's like to be the prey for a while."

"We haven't let anything else stop us so far. This won't be any different.

"Brave talk, my friend, but I'm afraid we may both wish we'd never taken up this quest before very long."

And there is yet another, whose thoughts are on the same matter, another who goes by the name of....

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The Accursed Code

BY BILL CANTEY

That comic magazines have survived the imposition os The Comics Code Authority proves the value of the medium and the loyalty of its fans. Almost everyone enjoys comics in some form. The few who don't are either devoid of imagination and a sense of humor; or in a moment of puffed-up self importance, publicly denounced comics and are forever stuck with that commitment.

The Code came into being as a defense against attack at a time when comics were most vulnerable to attack. Other than the editors and publishers, comics had no defenders. So, a conditional surrender was negotiated. For almost ten years, comics were pure oatmeal. Then, in the early sixties, Marvel jacked up its publications with a new attitude. At about the same time, nostalgia and "camp" gave the medium another boost. Books were written, collections of great comic books were reprinted and offered in hard back and soft cover. Comics are now considered an art form by many reasonable people.

But, what's to be done now? What is the value and the essence of the Comic Magazine; especially the super hero comic? Does it really have a purpose or a place? And most important, does it have a defense strong enough to allow the artists to progress unhindered by a Code that must have been written by a very religious eunuch? I say, YES! And the time couldn't be better. This is the age of enlightment. Besides, television is the new whipping boy. The very young and very impressionable spend their time glued to the boob tube. Comics are now for the more demanding and the more social. The attitude of(and for) comics has changed from a introverted withdrawal from reality into the most communicable of the entertainment mediums. Comics can be enjoyed alone, or with a group. They can be discussed before, during or after reading. They are tangible and immediate. No medium is more completely at the service of the enjoyers. The Super-Heroes who have survived down through the ages offer common ground for discussion for everyone from the very young to the very old. Comics are comminication for the generations.

Personally, I'd remove all censurship, and ignore the vulgar and badly drawn magazines. Of course, that's asking for trouble in the form of another crackdown. So, I'm willing to put it in the hands of the masters. The true artists (cartoonists/writers),are the best judges. Good examples of unhindered graphic stories are Steve Ditko's "MR. A" and Wallace Wood's "ANIMAN." Neither went too far and both were ultra-satisfying.

The following is a breakdown of comic magazines and suggested form of presentation for each. Very likely, some of the ideas are impractical, but so is the current, prevailing method.

Types Of Comics -- And Suggestions

1- Funny animals and funny people. Humor on a very low level (with a few exceptions..) These simply drawn comics require little effort on the part of the artists!! They should remain 10¢ indefinitley and occupy the lowest level on the newsrack.

2-Comics based on T.V. shows. Censured twice over. Usually very dull. Drop 'em and use the money to beef up the Super-Hero mags'.

3- Teen and Love comics. Actually aimed at pre-teens. I can't judge 'em because I haven't checked 'em in fifteen years. You tell me. Personally, I'd drop 'em.

4- Super Hero. The most enduring comic with the broadest appeal. If the industry is determined to continue the romance element, this might be the place. A 25¢ mag, starring the hero in action with the hero's private life and problems as a secondary feature, might increase the depth of the character. Taboos against common knowledge subjects (effects of drugs, pregnancy- its cause and cure, pain & injury etc.) should be dropped. Daily comic strip characters have grown up with the past generation. The Hero often expresses a desire to beat hell out of the villian or to jump on the heroine. This type of magazine should have, at least, as much freedom. Also, shapely gals are not sin on feet. As long as maiden modesty is protected by a strategically placed arm or a well turned thigh, I see nothing wrong with accentuating the female's form as well and as often as the male's. Finally, I enter a plea for more realistic action and reaction; the Super-Hero without normal desires becomes another costumes "fruit".

5- War and western. Demands realism in art & action. War was/is HELL, and frontier life

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

He Who Rides The Night

"In the days that followed the war between the states, greed and lust for power bred hatred & lawlessness across the rolling hills of the west and only a handful of brave men stood their ground to make the vast new territory a safe place for free men to live. One such man was Carter Slade, a school teacher from Ohio who rode west never dreaming that he was destined to become He Who Rides The Night Winds... The Ghost Rider." (From issue # 1.)

With these immortal words, Stan Lee unleashed upon an unsuspecting Marveldom, a new and different character, a Ghost Rider. Yet, Marveldom's involvment with the Marvel Super Heroes caused it to gloss over this new character as if he were a mere blob of insignificance. And, in the midst of this neglect, The Ghost Rider after only seven short issues.

Now let us take a closer look at this man who is gone, but can never be forgotten!!! Carter Slade came west to teach school & settle down.

Yet, he is immediatley catapulted into the midst of a fued between the cattlemen and "nesters". For his efforts, he is wounded and left for dead by Jason Bartholemew's men (the cattlemen) who are disguised as indians. From the midst of the aftermath of the attack, emerges the boy -- Jamie Jacobs who miraculously survived the massacre of his parents by hiding in the cellar. Jamie's attempts to get Carter Slade to the doctor have unexpected results. He heads in the wrong direction. Finally, weak from his ordeal, Jamie collapses!!! The Indians rescue them both.

Flaming Star, the tribal medicine man, heals both Carter and the boy. Carter believes that the Great Spirit spared his life for a purpose. He determines to discover that purpose. According to Flaming Star, the Spirits promised to send a white warrior, a man who would ride the night winds. He gave Carter the sacred dust of the spirits (taken from a meteor) which reflects the tiniest portion of light. And he led him to the ghost horse.Carter tames the white demon and christens him BANSHEE.

Shortly, thereafter, Carter Slade makes two very important decisions: First, he decides to be a substitute father for Jamie. Second he dons a white costume treated with the glowing powder of the ancients and becomes... The Ghost Rider.

Like the Two-Gun Kid, Ghost Rider wears a costume and has a secret identity. Like the other Marvel western stars, he rides a horse & fights for justice. But there, the similarity ends! For Ghost Rider is indeed unlike any other western star. He must take his nickname seriously. He who rides the nightwinds must do his effective fighting only at night. For without the cloak of darkness, the Ghost Rider loses his most effective ally, and becomes just another gun hand.

However, in one aspect Ghost Rider is like **all** other Marvel superheroes. From the very beginning almost, he has been thwarted, tragic love life. As Carter Slade, he falls in love with Natalie Brooks, who is engaged to Clay Riley, the local storekeeper. Both Carter and Natalie feel this attraction and react by being cold and uncivil to each other. Yet inwardly their hearts ache because of this love which neither feels that they can openly admit.

To complicate this love affair, Ghost Rider innocently brings about an almost fatal accident for Natalie. During Ghost Rider's confrontation with her brother, the Sheriff,she is accidentally shot in the spine by her brother!! Only an immediate operation in Denver can ever hope to restore life to her legs.

At this point, a comparison between Sheriff Ben Brooks and newspaper publisher J. Jonah Jameson is in order. As all of Marveldom knows old JJJ is Spiderman's sworn enemy. Never a good word does he have to say about the famous web spinner. Not even an endorsement from heaven could evoke one kind word from old JJJ about Spiderman. His many good deeds are misinterpreted on purpose.

Ben Brooks is to Ghost Rider, what Jameson is to Spiderman. No matter how many times, he saves Natalie and/or the settlers of Bison Bend, Sheriff Brooks will not believe he is anything but a desparado waiting for the proper moment to strike against an unsuspecting town!! His hatred, fanned by Natalies' accident, is a major threat to Ghost Rider. Slowly, the people of Bison Bend are beginning to believe that Ben Brooks is right. Very often, Ghost Rider must elude a well intentioned, but misinformed possee before he can even begin to cope with the real menace.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Winds---THE GHOST RIDER!

To do this, Ghost Rider employs a variety of weapons. They are unlike those used by any other western ranny. Compared to these weapons, the six gun can almost be considered obsolete.

One of the Ghost Riders' most beneficial weapons is his lantern-projector. While he remains hidden in the shadows, the lantern casts his image on the nearest solid structure,a wall for instance. That, plus his inner black cape causes him to appear as a ghostly apparition.

Another useful weapon is the flaming hand. It was introduced in issue # 5; but never ex -plained. "Serialized Stan" promised to explain it "next ish". But the last two issues of the Ghost Rider never mentioned the flaming hand.

The lariat of darkness is rendered an equally effective weapon by the lantern projector. It's black color causes it to appear invisible when the lantern is shined on it. We, the readers, saw it on page 16, panel 1 of issue #2,because as "Think-Before-You-Shoot-Stan" said the panel was covered with a special, infra-red viewing shield. (very seldom, do I ever break into an article, but here I felt I just had to: "Think-Before-You-Shoot-Stan" was sick enough, but when he covered up an obvious artistic mistake with that "infra-red shield over the panel" bit -- that's a little too much. These cute lit -tle remarks must be aimed at 2 year olds. It not only breaks up the action ((and the action, was at it's very peak on this page), but also gives an all-around bad impression of Marvel to any of it's "newer" readers. Just a personal o-pinion of course -- editor).

But, perhaps the most effective of all his weapons are his ghostly appearance & spectre-like voice which are quite useful in wringing a confession from any stout-hearted evil do -er.

Ghost Rider's weapons and ghostly appearance have been used against some of the most un -usual and colorful villians ever to rob and plunder the west. The best of all the evil ran -nies to lock horns with Ghost Rider is the Tar -antula. He first appeared in issue # 2. He is a mysterious man clad in black, who sports a quick draw draw and a rawhide whip. At first,he alone of all the outlaws to cross paths with Ghost Rider could not be fooled or frightened by his appearance and manner. But, eventually he rode off saying that he did not know how to cope with the spirits. Naturally, he rode back into the Ghost Rider's life in issue # 4 & # 5. This time he changed his tactics. By dropping a few well-planned hints,causes the people of Bi-son Bend to believe that Ghost Rider is his nef -arious partner in crime.

As mysteries go, The Tarantula is a well sustained one. His face nor real name were ever revealed. The only clue to his identity is his south-of-the-border-accent. The mystery deepened in issue # 5 when a blow on the head caused the Tarantula to forget his identity, discard his mask and ride off into the dusk, leaving an unconscious Ghost Rider to awaken and wonder what had happened. But Ghost Rider's bewilder -ment was never solved for the Tarantula never a -gain appeared within the pages of Ghost Rider!

Another villian worthy of notice is Sting -Ray. Formerly in issue # 57 of The Rawhide Kid he was known as The Scorpion. He escaped jail & settled in the town of Bison Bend as a druggist. His blue and red costume would make any modern day super villian envious. His uniique weapon is the Sting-Ray'a serum causing temporary par-alysis.

Perhaps the most tragic villian was in re -ality, Flaming Star's son, Towering Oaks. In a desperate bid to become powerful, he ambushed Ghost Rider and steals the spirit stone, a gift from Flaming Star to Ghost Rider because of his worthy execution of the duties of he who rides the night winds. Like the glowing dust, the spirit stone also comes from the fateful mete-or. He who wears the stone pssesses untold strength. But that provided to be his undoing!! The very spirits Towering Oak chose to defy and mock reached out and snuffed out his life as if he were an insignificant fleck of dust in the vast universe. Along with his grief, and his son, Flaming Oak buries the stone forever.

"Panther" by

MIKE O'NEAL

Article by

SHIRLEY GORMAN

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

"GOOD LORD"

"Not Another Column By (ulp) Tony Isabella————————?"

About a month ago, Gary Groth came to me on bended knee and begged me to do a regular column for his fanzine. As that kind of thing is both embarassing and sickening, I agreed!!! You should have seen the tears of sheer joy well up in his eyes. I quickly told him to be on his way or I would change my mind. He was getting my shoes all soggy.

Actually, I have an ulterior motive for writing for the FANTASTIC FANZINE. I plan to take over comics fandom. Right now, my agents are working to take over every fanzine being published. For his aid, Mark Evanier is getting this 'zine. I've promised to turn over Betty & Veronica to Ann Henry for torture. Mike O'Neal is getting several of Jim Steranko's used zip-a-tone sheets.

So, you'd better read this column & like it, if you know what's good for you. You vill now read! TODAY COMICS FANDOM, TOMORROW THE WORLD!

Speaking of fan fiction, I noticed that FANTASTIC FANZINE is running two serials. Not to attack fans Kowalski and Salter (TONY WROTE THIS ARTICLE AFTER SEEING "FF" 6*7 -ed.), but fan fiction does not work when confined to one page or less. This is the fault of no one person. The editor os a 'zine who specializes in articles and columns can't afford to give fiction more space. (Unless he has a fifty page 'zine). The fan writer has this unnatural tendency, also, to underestimate his plot. He gives it much less space than it needs to be properly developed.

The only kind of fiction that an editor of an article-column 'zine should present is short-short stories. That's the only kind of fiction that can be done right in his 'zine, unless he'd got the page count of a CONCUSSION.

The fan fiction writer owes it to himself and to his story to find 'zines which can give him the pages necessary to develop his plot. Unfortunately, THERE ARE NO FIFTY page fiction zines.

This brings to me to a pleato any prospective fan editors in the audience. Don't bring out an article/column 'zine unless you can offer something different to fandom.Almost unexplored are the fiction 'zine and the amastrip 'zine. If any of you out there are considering such zines, I'll help you in any way I can. For more information, write me at:11203 PEONY AVENUE//CLEVELAND, OHIO//44111//

Back to the subject of fan fiction. Both of the pieces in FANTASTIC FANZINE # 6*7 were serials. Serial writing is very common in fanzines. It's a shame, so few are well done. Again, though, this is always the writers fault.

I don't claim to be the world's greatest fan serial writer. (Sherman Howard wins that award). However, I have studied the movie serial and how it can be adapted to text form. I summed up my thoughts on the first chapter of any serial in FANTASY WORLD # 2. I'll restate them for the benefit of those who missed them:

The first chapter, of necessity be the longest chapter, with the possible exception of the final chapter. The first chapter has many functions.

First, it must introduce the heroes and villians (unless, of course, the villian is a mystery figure) and give them adequate characterization. This adequate characterization should be the basis for further character de-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

velopment. If a character changes viewpoints - it should be gradual and realistic.

Second, the first chapter must start the plot rolling. You should give the basic con - flict and then build on it. You must give the reader enough to become intrigued by the poss- ibilities of your story.

Once the characters and plot have been introduced, you've got to satisfy your reader- s' craving for action. I like to have two good fights in each installment and about three deaths or murder attempts. Of course, I'm a vi -olent person.

Now that you've entrapped the reader within your story, leave him hanging there.Get your hero in a death trap and let the reader sweat it out until the next installment.

The first chapter is not too hard to write. The problem comes with your later chap- ters. Don't strech out the story for too many- months. Let it develop naturally, yet advance the plot to some degree in every chapter. Put enough excitement into each installment to keep the reader interested to keep him hanging until the last chapters end.

The most successful serials of the fort- ies followed this technique. It's a basic for- mat that still works today.

One last writing tip before I move on: Take it for what you think it's worth. If a cha -racter is screaming in rage or madness, capit- alize his shouts. This gives added emphasis to his screams. For example, "EVANIER! GET OUT OF MY COLUMN!"

I've got to commend your groveling editor - Gary Groth (just to prove I remember his name which you've probably forgotten since starting this long winded column). His placement of ill- ustrations in FANTASTIC FANZINE 6*7 & 8*9 were just beautiful. The illo's actually had some - thing to do with the articles they appeared within. I may be a minority, but it's always bugged me to see a picture of Spiderman within an article on "How Sue Richards Managed To Stay Pregnant For Twelve Months Without Ordering Pickles and Ice Cream Even Once". That's not very professional looking.

ALTER-EGO and most of the first fanzines on the market had illos that matched the art - icles. Either the artists drew special drawings for the articles or the writers wrote articles around the illos, but it looked great. Why can- 't this be done in more 'zines today? In most cases, except when a lazy person like me just makes the deadline, the 'zine eds have the art- icles early enough in advance to contact an art -ist to do special illos. The only problem, I see is that it might put a heavier burden on the artist. (On the other hand, if some zine ed were to tell me that Cockrum Grinage or O'Neal had done a full page of the Thing making out with Supergirl and asked me to write a special article around that drawing, I most naturally would comply. However, I would probably get drummed out of fandom for bringing up such a stupid topic anyway).

All of which brings me, and isn't it a - mazing how such an unrelated topic can lead in- to my next paragraph, to the following question -- SHOULD AMETUER PUBLICATIONS LOOK AMATEURIST- IC?? My answer is NO. Even a dittoes 'zine can look well done. It can still have professional layout, etc. I've seen dittoed 'zines that looked better, even art-wise, than photo-offset 'zines. It'a all a matter of working hard -- no matter what your limitations or advantages.Dig?

All of which, in turn,brings me to the following restatement of policy: I WILL WRITE FOR ANY FANZINE IN THE WORLD AND ANY 'ZINE OUT- SIDE THAT AREA (IF THEY ENCLOSE POSTAGE TO THEIR PLANET) IF THEY REQUEST IT. The only lim- iting factor, gentle readers, is time. I am not independently wealthy. I have to work so that I can earn enough to pay for my comics, typing paper, stamps, envelopes and maybe even educat- ion.

So please, don't be upset if I don't an - swer you right away. I'll make every effort possible, but I do get an awful lot of requests. Sometimes, mail gets lost in the confusion. A whole packet of letters was lost a few months a -go. If you don't hear from me in a month,write again. My office is in a state of perpetual chaos and these things happen.

I never ask for monetary rewards.(However if every 'zine editor were to pay 1¢ a word, I could retire and devote my life to writing for fanzines). A copy or two of the issue my work appears in is all I ask. Okay?

I did want to talk on some Marvel topic this issue, so before I get off on some other fannish subject, I'll state that Barry Smith is a person. A person is a fan or pro that gives freely of himself to make the comic art form a

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

"THE WINDMILLS OF MY MIND" by Tony Isabella continued...

bit better. Dave Cockrum, Stan Lee, Al Grinage, Mike O'Neal, Jim Steranko, and many others are persons!! Ann Henry is a person and bless her, I only wish there were more female writers. Mark Evanier and Gary Groth are trying to be persons, but...

I really don't want to talk about who's a person and who isn't a person, and why certain person's are, in reality enemies, so I'm going to throw out a few opinions about Barry Smith's art-- work in the few books he has done.

I disliked Barry's first job, that single X-Men issue. I thought his layouts unimaginitive, his backgrounds bland, & his figures poorly drawn. In short, the issue was a mess!

His figures hadn't improved any in his sec-- ond job on Nick Fury, A-- gent of S.H.I.E.L.D. His backgrounds had improved slightly. His layouts were very imaginitive, comparible with Sterankos in some respects. Still, Barry Smith lacked something. He was not doing artwork up to Marvel's standards.

Then, Mr. Smith did a series of covers for Marvel magazines. These, I believe, helped his develop a real artistic imagination. His KA-ZAR cover was nothing unusual, but he was using more detail. His jungle background was great. Not too awesome, yet appealing. It did-not detract from the action, yet it contributed to the entire cover scene.

Smith's next cover for Captain Marvel # 11, was a masterpiece. It is easily the best cover ever to appear on that title. The swooping spaceship, the fleeing Mar-Vell, the liv-- ing mountain, Zo, and the simple background -- combined to make this cover a work of art. It is Smith's best cover to date.

His cover for X-Men # 55 was very well-done. His figures had improved immencley over his previous X-Men attempt. It was a well-done cover.

The first issue of Daredevil that Barry-Smith drew was only adequate. His layouts were good and his figures and backgrounds were vast -ly improved. Yet, something about it didn't seem right. This could be contributed to many, many factors. It was Smith's first shot at Daredevil and Johnny Craig's first inking of Barry's pencils. I have to say that the strip moved at a faster clip than Colan's Daredevil-stories usually do.

Then it happened!! DAREDEVIL # 51 was 1 of the finest art jobs done on that title. From every respect, it was great. Oh, there were a few flaws, but on the whole, it was a darn fine job. Smith's interpretation of Star Saxon was fantastic. After that, Colan's version was worthless.

Smith's third issue of Daredevil w a s just as good as his second. This issue w a s also Roy Thomas's best issue to date. The ish was just magnificent.

Of special note is Smith's cover for this issue. The wierd angle shots, the dynamic figures of "DD" and the Panther leaping down from the buildings, the ghostly figures of Karen, Saxon and the police inspector gave the cover an eerie effect. Easily, one of the best Daredevil covers ever.

Barry Smith did a suprisingly good job on the AVENGERS. Suprising when you consider that he is inked by Syd Shores, whose inking style (and pencilling, from what I've seen of it) is totally unsuited for super-hero adven-- tures. He had a little trouble with Goliath & the Wasp, but he drew the Vision, Thor, Yellow -jacket, Iron Man superbly. In fact, only Jack Kirby and George Tuska can match his Iron Man. (AUTHORS NOTE TO GET HIMSELF IN TROUBLE WITH HALF OF FANDOM: I never liked Colan's Iron Man. It wasn't Gene's type of strip. He's best on Dr. Strange, Captain Marvel and the Gaurdians of the Galaxy. George Tuska is the best artist to regularly draw Iron Man). Also, that sequ - ence with the Vision walking through the SHIELD guard is the best sequence with the cha -racter since the first page of AVENGERS # 57.

In conclusion, Barry Smith has arrived!! He is a very good artist and I predict in a year he'll be matching, or topping the work Jim Steranko did on SHIELD and CAPTAIN AMERICA.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

FUTITAKE
17

T'WAS A COLD, BLIZZARD BLOWN NIGHT AND SILAS GRUBB, THE TOWN'S RICHEST MISER, SLEPT FITFULLY UNTIL SUDDENLY, A SOUND!

THUD

THE SUSPICIOUS GRUBB IS INSTANTLY WIDE AWAKE...

HAH! SOME FOOL'S BROKEN IN! A CLUMSY PROWLER! I KNEW THAT THEY IN THEIR ENVY WOULD TRY SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

BAH! NOBODY CAN SAY THAT I, SILAS GRUB, WAS EVER UNPREPARED! HEH, HEH! THAT'S WHY I SLEEP WITH MY SHOTGUN NEAR ME, LOADED!

THERE! IN THE SHADOW WITH A SACK ALREADY HALF STUFFED! THE FILTHY SWINE!

BEING AS BIG AS HE IS, HE'LL BE DANGEROUS! HMM... HE'S MOVED INTO THE DEN WHERE I KEEP MY CASH AND PRECIOUS ART PIECES!

NO! HE'S ALREADY IN FRONT OF THE WALL SAFE BY THE FIREPLACE! THE SELFISH PIG! I SHOOT HIM AND I CAN CLAIM SELF-DEFENSE... UH,OH, HE'S TURNING...

BLAGGARD! TAKE THAT AND THAT! AND NOW...

BLAM BLAM

..SOME LIGHT TO REVEAL THIS EVIL DEV... URK!

SILAS

MORAL:
"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SANTA CLAUS, ...ANYMORE!"

TO GARY Best Wishes

Column Cont...

And as long as I'm directly speaking a-bout BARRY SMITH, and since I know he's reciev-ing this issue, I'm going to ask him his opin-ions on two of the original Power strips(from England). How about it Barry? What do you think of The Python and of Don Starr? & would it be cheating to tell us what you did on the Power Publications?

- - - - - - - - - - - - - -

I've already gone on for quite a few paragraph-s, so I'll call it quits for my first column for FANTASTIC FANZINE. However, I'd like to give you my statement of policy for this col--umn. I will follow this policy whenever feas--ible:

I am the writer of this column & as such it is my duty to make this column as interest-ing as possible. I should be motivated by two driving forces -- my desire to be heard, & my desire to please the readers. If I deviate from this policy, then this column has no pur-pose -- no meaning.

I am vastly interested in talking about subjects you want to hear about. So tell me!! Write to Gary Groth with suggestions. Write to Mark Evanier. (Why should I be the only one to suffer? He won't be able to help you, but it will really get him angry at yours truly).

Write to me. But, for Gods sakes, write! If Fandom is to function as a living,breathing body, everybody's got to be heard. So, let's hear what you want to hear me sound off about.

Would you like an article on the english reprints? I'll try to get an interview with the editors there. I'll try to provide comple-te information.

Would you like me to evaluate the Comics Code, paragraph by paragraph? I'll try to de--liver the goods. Would you like a review of Seduction of the Innocent? I'll try to get through the entire book this time.

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS, PEOPLE....!

THE END

ff..staff

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CLUB MEMO'S continued...

Response to the IOCC (International Org-anization of Comic Collectors) has been next to nill. What happened? People said that they would join, people said that they would pledge to join -- and only 25 people joined. It only costs $1.00 for the rest of the year of 1969 : already, we have one, offset, 8 page, wrap - a-round newsletter out!!! JOIN UP NOW.

This issue is a trifle late, and I apol-igize for it, but several things have influen-ced the frequency of FF; first and foremost is the upcoming school year, and next is mail: The mail is getting out of hand. I answer all letters I get, although it may take awhile. To insure an answer, in the future, a stamped --- self addressed envelope would help immencely!! Also, for those of you who send in artwork and are trying to "break into Fandom", please send a large brown envelope with enough postage to send it back to you, in case of rejection. If you do not do this, and if you are not on our art staff, I will not send it back. -- I can't afford it. "Col. Thar Kosis" was discontinued because of Tom Crawford's usuage of Marvel's own characters, which could bring us a law -- suit from Marvel. Big things are in the plann-ing for The Bombshell Bulletin. Keep your eyes glued to future "Club Memo's pages for news.

The cover of this issue, by JIM STERANKO was a sketch taken from a full color poster, now on sale at MARVELMANIA. The cover to this issue was gotten at the convention and was, at that time, still in pencil. After purchasing it, I met Joe Sinnott, and asked him if he'd like to ink it. Joe was nice enough to ink it in just a couple weeks of my giving it to him, and I think he deserves a great round' of app-lause from all of you -- thanks again Joe.

Special thanks this issue goes to DAVE COCKRUM, for drawing up to special title "logos". One, he did for his own Interview, and the oth-er for Tony Isabella's column, "The Windmill-s of My Mind". The Interview with Dave, this issue is just the first, of many fan interview-s to appear in FF. I think that it brings the staff of the FF closer to YOU! * * * FINI

A REBUTTAL TO.....
"A Look At The Future Of Comicdom"

(Originally Presented In 'F.F' No. 8*9)

by Doug Martin

In Fantastic Fanzine # 8*9, Lane Bailey set forth his views on the future of Comicdom,& the past events that will affect the future. I read the article with interest, but I can not a-gree with many of the statements contained in it! I also feel that this shows a problem that is seen in many fan articles; that being that Marvel fans look at things from Marvel's view--point, D.C. fans look at things from D.C.'s viewpoint, but not enough people look at things from a comic fan's viewpoint.

Lane Bailey is obviosly a Marvel fan. There is nothing wrong with this in itself after a long wait, I find myself enjoying most of what Marvel produces. But his article was a look at Comicdom's future from a Marvel fan's view---point, and for this reason, I feel he has made several assumptions that are untrue, and destroy the credability of his predictions.

The first point I would like to set down is this: no matter what the artistic field, once an artist or a product catches on with the pub--lic, his/her work will always find an audience barring a sharp drop in quality. For example:::: take J.R.R. Tolkein. His Lord of The Rings Trilogy had been on the market for more than a dec--ade before they finally caught on with a large segment of the reading public. Now, any and all of his past work is eagerly sought, although it had been ignored for years before. Jaquellan Susann, considered by most critics to be a poor authoress, got a best seller, and barring a loss of the quality that sells them, the rest of her books, bad as they are, will also sell.

This is also true of the comic magazine..! Once a character catches on, the tendancy is for him to stay on the scene. This is one reason why it is said that the first several issues of a hero's magazine will make or break him. This helps explain the phenomenon of the Marvelite who never misses a single issue of a single Marvel title. Marvel had produced their product in obscurity several years before they were discovered. In an extremely short period of time, Marvel was in the running for the top comic group. One reason for this is that Stan Lee had the foresight to set up his titles in such a way that they were all a part of a Marvel "universe". Therefore, when one title was discovered, they all were. Now the reader gets into the habit of buying all the Marvel titles, because they are all interrelated. After all, I'm sure most of you know almost exactly which comies you will buy in a given month, because you are accustomed to buying certain ones. It's the same with the Marvelite, who buys all Marvel titles, because after discovering one Marvel, he found the rest, & soon got in the habit of buying them. For this reason, everything new that fits into the Marvel "universe" should theoretically sell, and in the past, all of it did.

And this brings us to my second point: Lane made a point that fifteen D.C. titles have failed. These, however, were also old titles as well as new, and were not all new as he would infer. Only a few new D.C. titles have failed, but all that have failed were super hero titles. Also, he said Marvel has dropped only one title: again false!!! What about the Spectacular Spider-man? Also, several of their mags have gone bi-monthly, and Captain Marvel seems to be near death.

Of all the D.C. superheroes' who have died, all were either (1) new titles, (2) old ones which weren't really too popular or (3) former popular features whose quality had fallen so far that they lost their audience. The long establish-ed D.C. comics with the exception of Hawkman and

Rebuttal: A Look At The Future Of Comicdom

Blackhawk, who fit in (3), stayed on. The Spectacular Spider-Man tried for a different audience and failed, and if you will notice, all the bi-monthlies are new mags. For the most part, they were originally the minor feature in a split mag. As with D.C., the established features stayed. All this tends to show that the super hero is losing popularity. Of the D.C. mags that are around, all the new ones are horro, with some war and western titles. Marvels newest are horror and romance.

What all this means is that there are two tendencies working against each other. The result, I feel, is that most of the present titles will stay, but there will be little in the way of new SUPERHERO mags. In the case of D.C., this is almost a sure thing, and a couple of border-line cases may yet be dropped, but I think D.C. has pretty well settled down.

Unfortunatley, I can't agree with Lane's analysis of Marvel's future. First,assuming Marvel's more popular among fans, and that's quite an assumption, this does not mean they will keep Marvel going. Lane seems to think that the reason Marvel is becoming is because it appeals to the fans. This is rediculous. Despite what some fans seem to think,fandoms members make up an extremely small (though vocal) minority of the comic reading public. Even if every fan bought a certain title (and this seems to be next to immpossible), these sales, alone would not be nearly enough to sell the issue. Therefore, even though Marvel has the close-knitness that fans like, this does not insure their future, as Lane seems to think.

Secondly, Stan Lee does not write for an adult audience. I have heard this so often that it makes me sick. No editor in his right mind would write for adults. Lee writes for the high-school-colledge reader. One of the main differences between Marvel and D.C. is that Marvel writes on a more "sophisticated" level. They write the typical cops-'n-robbers type story, only it's all larger than life. Stan Lee has said as much. This is the type of story that appeals to the young people of today, and not a large amount of adults. This is why most of the villians and many of the hero's speak in that "Asgardian" dilect. It's all melodramatic to the extreme, and appealing to the older youth.

However, this audience is extremely-unpredictable. As I see it, Marvel could-continue as it is, with some moderate success on any new titles they might come out with, or they may experience anything from a slight recession to a disaster as the bottom drops from their audience. Of course, I cannot see the latter happening, but I am saying that it's next to immpossible to predict Marvel's future, much less say it will overtaking D.C.

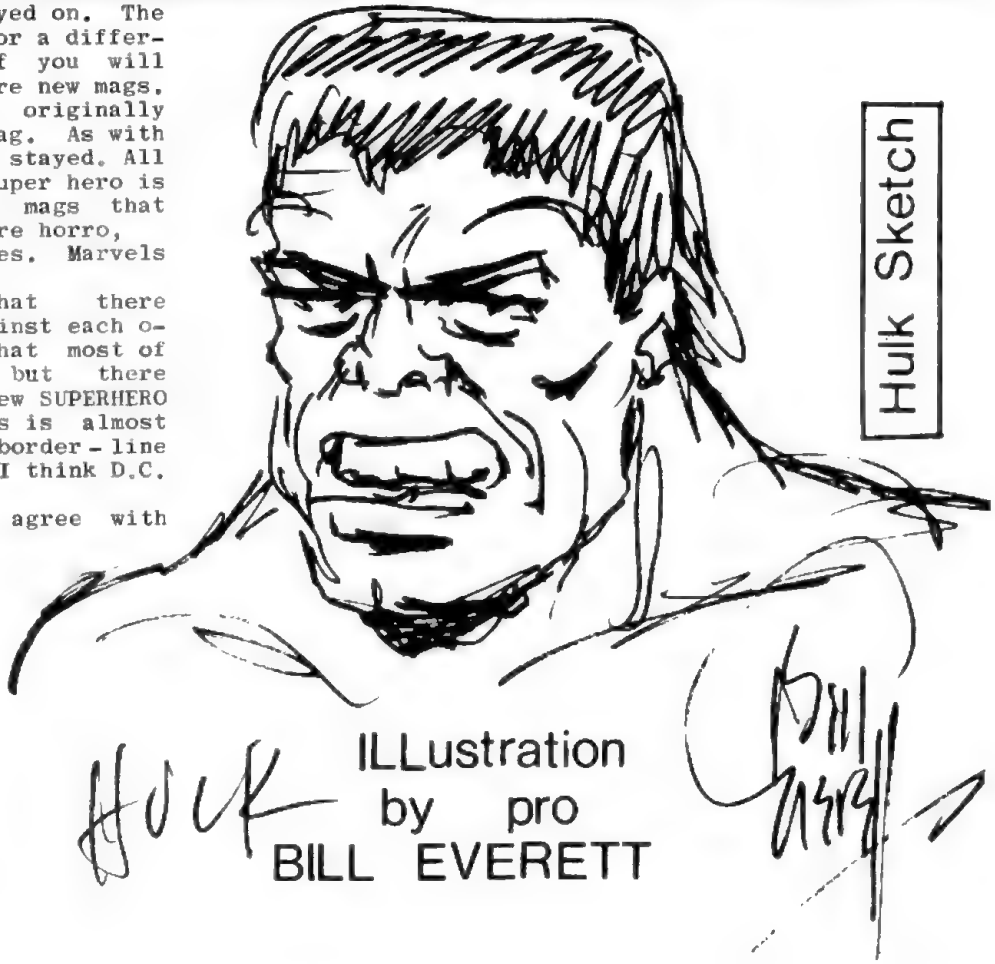

ILLustration by pro BILL EVERETT

As for who is going to sell more, the answer must be D.C. One reason D.C. had such a high drop in sales this time is that it produced more for the new titles that flopped, so it all comes out a little bit less than even. However, they still sold three times as much as Marvel, & as long as Superman and Batman are there, it is safe to assume they will continue to do so. As Lane said, Marvel will continue to advance gradually, but probably so gradually that it will take them years to catch up. D.C. may lose a little more, but only a very little, and this lose will soon be made up.

In the future, I see only a promise for better things to come. Lane seems to think that the graphic story is losing its appeal. Not so!! This is only the super-hero. However, the horror mags that would take their place are only watered-down versions of the ones of the '50's, and I think people will soon tire of them. Then the time will be right for a rebirth of the SUPERHERO, and if past experience applys to the future, they will be better than ever.

-Doug Martin-

The End * *

Continuations

THE SEARCH: CHAPTER III continued...

CRIMEMASTER. In his central base, located somewhere in Centerline, the arch-criminal reads the reports from his men in the field & his anger mounts with each passing moment. In a rage - he rips the reports to pieces, shouting his frustrations to the heavens:

"They had CRIMESMASHER in their hands and they they let him get away. I arrange to have THE MASK executed and my marksman misses. They must lived charmed lives. But they shall not live much longer. This I swear, before the year is out those two thorns in my side will grovel before me, begging me to spare them!"

Meanwhile, the objects of his wraith are settling down for the night, unaware of the vow made by their mortal enemy.

Two forces headed on a collision course & no one may say who will survive the meeting.But one thing is sure, meet they will. The only question is WHEN?

Continued Next Issue...

HE WHO RIDES THE NIGHTWINDS continued...

The final villian Ghost Rider encountered in reality was not a villian at all. He was naught but a lonely, half crazed mountain man who was merely defending "his" mountain..! His grief stricken mind thought that Natalie was his dead wife, Melinda. In the end, he gave his life that she might live. (# 7).

Indifference killed GHOST RIDER.Both Stan Lee and Co. and Marveldom were to Super Hero concious to pay proper heed to Ghost Rider un--til it was too late. The discontinuance of his adventures leaves many a mystery unsolved and much in doubt. Who is Tarantuala? What is his real identity? What is to be the outcome of his amnesia? What is the secret of the flaming hand? Did Natalie Brooks ever get to Denver in time for the operation which was to restore life to her legs? These questions deserve an answer.

It seems a lifetime that The Mighty Marvel Bullpen promised that Ghost Rider's adventures-would be continued in the TWO-GUN KID book. An we all know what happened to TWO GUN. Of course this promise was never realized.

Now, once again, the rebirth of Ghost Rid -er is being promised to Marveldom. Whether this promise bears fruit or not, is for the fut -ure to decide. But if Stan Lee and Co. decide to give Ghost Rider a new lease on life, I am one Marvelite who hereby promises to be there for each and every issue. What say you Marveldom? If the curtain rises for Ghost Rider, will we be there? Or will we allow him to once again be cast into an oblivion from which there can be no second escape?

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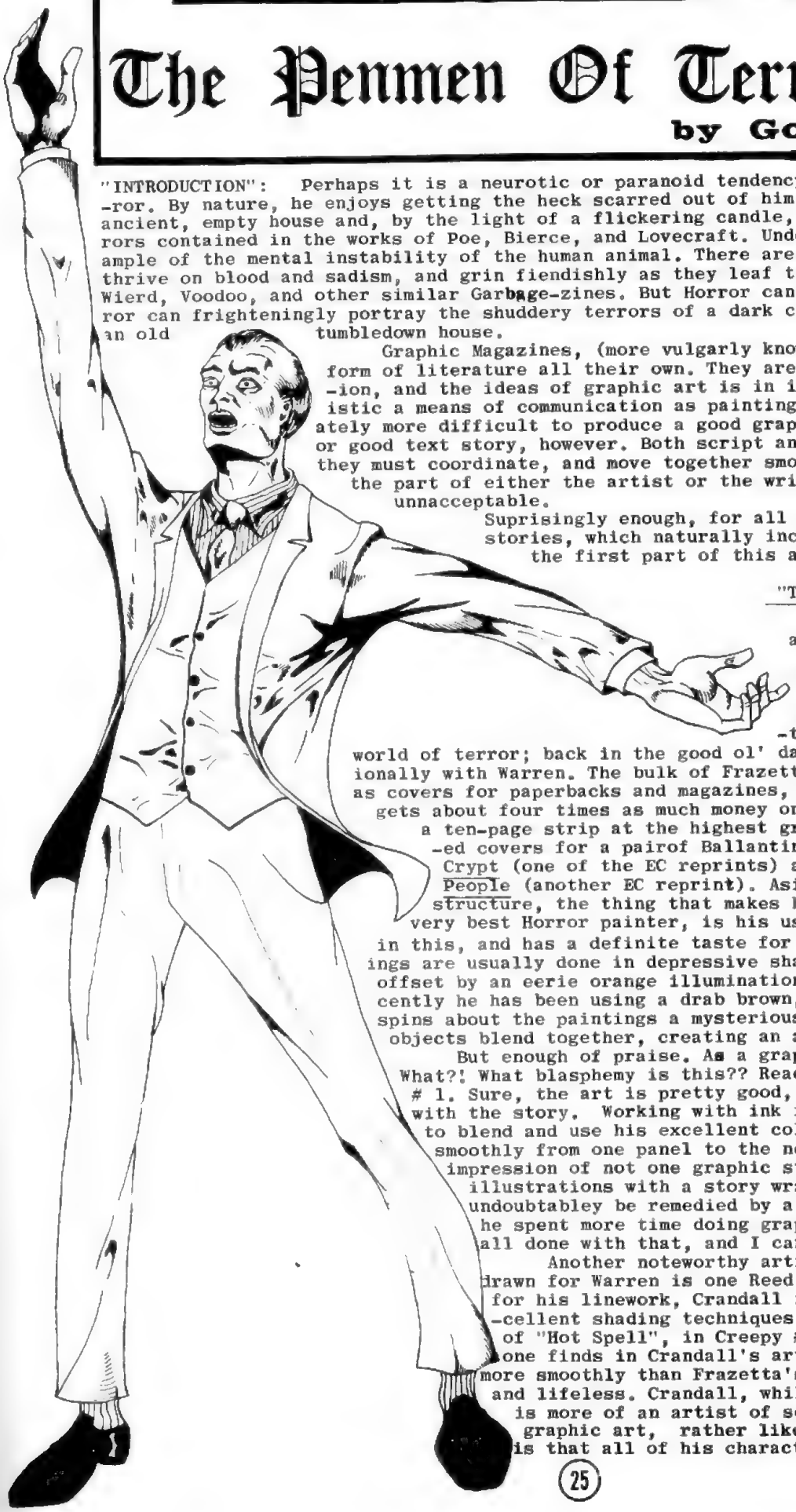
The Penmen Of Terror

by Gordon Mathews



"INTRODUCTION": Perhaps it is a neurotic or paranoid tendency, but man is attracted by hor -ror. By nature, he enjoys getting the heck scarred out of him. He loves to sit alone is an ancient, empty house and, by the light of a flickering candle, read slowly through the ter -rors contained in the works of Poe, Bierce, and Lovecraft. Undoubtabley this is a good ex -ample of the mental instability of the human animal. There are some sicker than others. They thrive on blood and sadism, and grin fiendishly as they leaf through the pages of Chilling, Wierd, Voodoo, and other similar Garbage-zines. But Horror can be art. A true master of hor-ror can frighteningly portray the shuddery terrors of a dark corner, a lonely graveyard, or an old tumbledown house.

Graphic Magazines, (more vulgarly known as "Comic Books") are a form of literature all their own. They are a seperate form of communicat -ion, and the ideas of graphic art is in itself fully as good and art-istic a means of communication as paintings or text stories. It is infin ately more difficult to produce a good graphic story than a good painting or good text story, however. Both script and art must be acceptable, and they must coordinate, and move together smoothly. The slightest flaw on the part of either the artist or the writer can render a graphic story unacceptable.

Suprisingly enough, for all this, there are good graphic stories, which naturally include graphic horror, on which the first part of this article centers.

"THE PENMEN OF TERROR"

Outstanding in all types of art is the famous and popular FRANK FRAZETTA, possibly the most talented and versitile artist today. Although his main line of art is heroic fan -tasy, he often deals in the world of terror; back in the good ol' days with EC, now today occas -ionally with Warren. The bulk of Frazetta's art is oil paintings used as covers for paperbacks and magazines, which is understandable, as he gets about four times as much money on one paperback painting than a ten-page strip at the highest graphic art prices. He has paint -ed covers for a pairof Ballantine Books -- Tales From The Crypt (one of the EC reprints) and Ray Bradbury's The Autumn People (another EC reprint). Aside from detail, and muscle structure, the thing that makes him a good painter, and the very best Horror painter, is his use of colors. He is imaginitive in this, and has a definite taste for the macabre. His Horror paint-ings are usually done in depressive shades of green and blue,at times offset by an eerie orange illumination, such as a harvest moon. Re-cently he has been using a drab brown, which doesn't work as well.He spins about the paintings a mysterious mist and darkness; colors and objects blend together, creating an atmosphere of lurking danger.

But enough of praise. As a graphic artist, Frazetta wipes out. What?! What blasphemy is this?? Read his story "Werewolf"in Creepy # 1. Sure, the art is pretty good, but it doesn't fit smoothly with the story. Working with ink instead of paint, he is unable to blend and use his excellent coloring. His figures don't glide smoothly from one panel to the next, and the reader get's the impression of not one graphic story, but a series of seperate illustrations with a story wrapped around them. This could undoubtabley be remedied by a man of Frazetta's talents if he spent more time doing graphic illustration. However,hes all done with that, and I can't say as I blame him.

Another noteworthy artist from the EC days who has drawn for Warren is one Reed Crandall. Though, best known for his linework, Crandall is also capable of employing ex -cellent shading techniques, as wittnessed on the first pg. of "Hot Spell", in Creepy # 7. There are two main faults one finds in Crandall's art. While his panels progress more smoothly than Frazetta's, Crandall's figures are stiff and lifeless. Crandall, while being an excellent artist, is more of an artist of seperate illustrations than graphic art, rather like Frazetta. The other problem is that all of his characters look italian! Now I have

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

"THE PENMEN OF TERROR" continued.....

nothing against dagoes -- Sophia Loren in particular -- but it gets tiresome looking at no one but Italians. Aside from those 2 faults Crandell is a very fine Horror Illustrator. His is the gothic style, and he seems to like to make his setting in late 19th century European villages & medivial times,which is good, as both of those make good horror spots.

While not being one of the greatest nor the best of the graphic illustrator, we must take short note of Johnny Craig for his macabre sense of humor. Seemingly opposites, horror and humor can easily work hand-in-hand. I'm not speaking of comedy relief by means of some moronic simple -- ton thrown into an otherwise serious story (This was popular in the "Golden Age"), but rather very real humor. One good example is Poe's "Never Bet the Devel you Head" with the unforgettable Toby Dammit. Robert Bloch, famous for "Psycho" and other chillers, put together a large number of horror stories of the more frivilous nature.The one that pop's into my mind immediatley is "The Bat is my Brother", which is both the most humorous and most incisive vampire story I have ever read. Craig, likwise mingled the two at times. Take a look at the cover of "The Vault Of Horror" # 30. It depicts a group of people on the Bronx Express. A forearm -- alone, unattatched to the remainder of its owner's body -- is hanging...no, I won't spoil it for you; look at it yourself. If you can't grab ahold of "The Vault of Horror" # 30 itself, take a look at the cover repro in Fandom Agent 6*7. Note the ad at the back of the Express Reading:"Stomach Upset?" This sign is the fine artist's touch that seperates this from the revolting covers of Wierd, etc. that are apparently meant to be funny.

Another horror artist with a sense of humor is Jack Davis, whose art, even when deadly serious, has a touch of humor. But then, most of his art -- record album covers and magazine cover -- are supposed to be charicatures. Perhaps Davis' best side is uncovered while drawing children and exposing them for the monstrous little fiends they are. Who can forget "Let The Punishment Fit The Crime"? Or "Let's Play Poison"? Davis is also good at setting stories at small country towns. He is able to do these things, and do them well, because he does charicatures. He exaggerates things delightfully.

Coming into more recent times, we run into Jim Steranko. Like Frazetta, he is talented at nearly all forms of art. Unlike Frazetta,he can do graphic art well. His panels flow along smoothly and the reader gets the idea of a well oiled story. But now, getting to his horror story, "At The Stroke of Midnight". A rather corny title, don't you agree? Another thing is that his "Digger" looks nothing like the versions of Craig and Buscema. Steranko's version looks better. However, it is also more complicated, which is probably why the other two didn't adapt that version. The story is written as well as drawn by Steranko, which is good. If an artist plots and draws the story, the writer fills in the script might misinterpretor in some other manner louse up the strip while if the writer writes the script & sends it to the artist, the script may give the artist the wrong impression, or it might not inspire him, and glaring flaws would appear. "At The Stroke of Midnight" starts out with a nice horror setting -- an old house sitting on top of a lonely wind swept hill and gradually builds up suspence. Slowly, deliberatley, cruelly Steranko brings his story along and then - the shocking climax. The protagonists are suddenly and startlingly moved from their own sphere of life into another time, another world. What makes this so startling is the fact that Steranko, while forshadowing doom for the two, never gave us a hint that it would come in this fashion. This story is like a piece of music. It moves along slowly with a mysterious touch, and then, on the last page, the key and rythm changes, but it still progresses slowly, **until the final panel:** "Then they began to

The Immortals-Part 1

BY MIKE VITTI

INTRODUCTION: In the halls of Marveldom, there exists a fantastically powerful beings -- beings possessing that most magnificent gift...Imortality. These enitities----- these immortals exist in sundry areas of the universe areas including that speck-in-the-universe, EARTH. Upon Earth one encounters Thor, Hercules, Pluto and at times even Zues, and Odin -- the Asgardian All Father. But where do these men come from? Who are they? Furthermore, what are they?

MANUSCRIPT: ODIN & ZEUS

Odin, the omnipotent and all-wise and all-just, is ruler of Asgards, the home of the Norse Gods. Odin, as personified by the mystic pen of Stan Lee, owns a myriad of personalities. He can give the mild, gentle, Santa Claus image; conversely, at times, Odin images the full potent force and fury of the raging storm. Odin is not a passive God, he protects his empire; he purges evil as perpetrated by his son, LOKI - the demi-god of eviland finds it not too degrading to drive savage invaders from his lands while fighting at the front lines along with his fellow gods, collectivly known as the Aesir.

As a precaution against evil, especially evil endangering the Earth, Odin devised the Destroyer. This creation, lifeless and helpless without the driving force of a human spirit, can become the most potent force in the universe second only to the Force Ultimate --- ODIN. The Destroyer's shell has been occupied several times by various men (and woman) including a human hunter, the demi-god Locki and recently by the Stunning Sif. Each time the destroyer was bested and the spirit force ousted from the powerful shell.

Aside from the afore-mentioned plaything, Odin owns and guards the dread Odinsword. This immense sheathed dagger has the power --- if removed from its scabbard - to destroy all things and bring an end to all, including the Aesir. This final destruction and death of the gods has the name Ragnorak...! Ragnorak has been threatened many timed by the Trolls,the Destroyer and most recently by one called Mangog; A being having the combined might of a billion, billion beings Mangog came within inches of destroying the universe, but he was bested by means of Odin's power scepter.

As a just, as well as forceful god, Odin dispenses his regal wisdom with authority. It was in this same just authority that Odin once exiled his favored sone, Thor to Earth. This banishment was to instill a sense of humility in the young, impetous Thunder God. As he matured in his Earthly identity, he likewise matured in his godly identity -- one which he had forgotten through the mystic influence of Odin. Ultimatley, Odin triumphed, his son, who had been the young, foolish Thor had changed to the magnificent, not-s-rash THOR.

In his omniscience, Odin realized that he must some-how offset his immortality; that is, he must make up for the lack of a final rest which for men would lie in death. Thus, it is at certain times that the All Father rests in the Odinsleep -- a sleep which to awaken from would result in a lose of immortality and a sure death. It was in this slumber that Odin rested during the awesome threat of Mangog. It was only when he awoke himself that he destroyed that creature in one deft blow.

From time to time, there have been appearances by the greek counterpart of Odin -- ZEUS. Unlike the Asgardian, the Olympian sky father is not the courageous lord who craves battle, but rather is a mild luxury-loving god who usually is found reclining at a couch and oogling at sundry dancing maidens.

Odin's character is the very opposite of that of Zeus. That is to say, any Asgardian god must be (by the

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Continuations....

"THE IMMORTALS - PART 1 continued...

very character of the Norse Myths) fierce and warlike. The Olympians, however, by the force of their Myths must be lounging, luxury loving lords. The character of these gods, mirrors the character of the races who worshipped them....! These races saw the abodes of their gods in two places -- one in the skies of the Earth and on a mountain, the other in the skies of the cos--mos.

ASGARD-the domain of Odin, lies in the cosmos an unimaginable distance from earth.This Golden Realm is connected to the earth by the shimmering rainbow bridge. The Kingdom of Odin lives under the assurance of doom and destruc--tion; that is, the perdition which is known as Ragnorak must and will come. Thus, the Aesir has a dismal future indeed.

Olympus, however, is the site of never---ending revelry. The Olympians live a glorious life, one full of happiness not transitory, but eternal. This magnificent realm is located on that mystic, earthly mountain -- OLYMPUS.

NEXT....THE HEROIC SONS - THOR AND HERCULES

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"THE PENMEN OF TERROR" continued...

scream..." Then -- Crescendo! It reaches it's peak -- only for a split second -- and then it is gone. The music stops dead. One thing that adds to Steranko's success is that he does his own coloring, and here, he takes a page from Frazetta's paintings. Who can forget that cover of Captain America # 113? That eerie green sky, and the ghastly blue moon (that sort of thing appears about once in a blue moon) sends shudd-ers down the spine. For just a little while, Captain America was a horror mag. Steranko's faults? He doesn't have many, so long as he does his own coloring. However, if the color were re-moved, his stories might be hard to read,for the coloring is fully as much a part of his artwork, as is his pencilling. You may notice that often lines are unconnected by ink, but are made coher-ent by his coloring. So long as Steranko keeps working in color, everything's going to be fine.

Another modern artist with a touch for hor-ror, is Nick Cardy. Take a look at his covers on Witching Hour #'s 3 & 5 in particular, # 3 is done with some other artist -- Mike Sekowsky, I believe. But it's that extra Cardy rouch that makes it good. The effect of wind and dust or fog is done nicely, and the demons perched o n the tree above, provides the lurking fear. Color-ing effects are also done nicely. The total e--ffect created is a moody, atmospheric one.

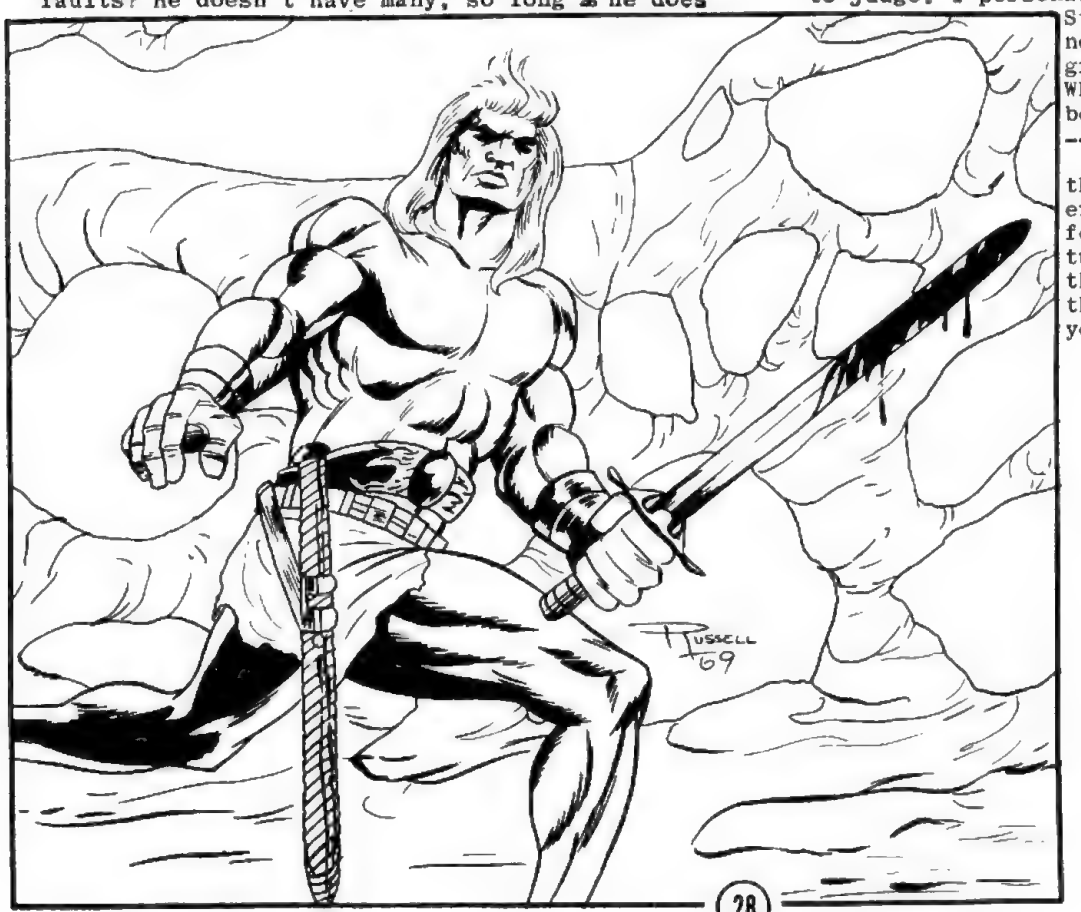
But, perhaps the best graphic horror artist of all is STEVE DITKO. His art produces a depres-sive atmosphere that none but Steranko and Fra-zetta, in his paintings can hope to match. Un---like the other two, Ditko's art is fully as good in black and white as in color, which gives him a definite advantage when working on CREEPY and EERIE. No other artist can draw sheer evil like Ditko, and none can imitate the wierd drawings of sculpture and trinkets thruout his stories..! No one can draw a corpse crumbling apart like Ditko, and there is but one who can match his feeling of mounting terror, that being Steranko. But there is only one Steve Ditko. His art is distictive. He is the graphic story counterpart, of Lee Brown Coye.

AFTERWORD TO PART I

Who is the best Graphic Horror artist? It is hard to judge. Perhaps their secret lies in the utter seperating of their art from that of more prosiac artists. Surely Paul Rienman & Jack Kirby would not be good horror illustrators. It is this strange distinctive quality in the art style of each, that makes it almost immpossible-to judge. I personally would cast my vote f o r Steve Ditko, but then, it's no great secret that I'm a great uncurable Ditko fiend.! Who am I to say that he is a better horror artist than,say ---JIM STERANKO?

Horror is certainly not the most popular type of lit-erature. That's why there are few artists who care to cap--ture the horror flavor. And those of you who do, olls though you may be, I salute you!!

THE END



"MYSTERIOUS MIRACLE"

It was true! The small farming village of San Marquin was doomed. A huge horde of arm -y ants was cutting its way through the Cen -- tral American jungle. In less than a week, the creeping menace would reach the outlying field -s; and in three days, the crops in the store houses, as well as those in the fields would be ravished by the bronzed invaders.

An appeal for help from the government had drawn a vague promise to, "look into the situation". But, plagues are not stopped by promises and small villages make small impress -ions on high officials. Finally, with no help forthcoming, the elders make the only plaus - ible decision. "The Villiage must be abandon - ed!"

Then, the young men of the villiage spoke up, "The Yankees! Perhaps the Yankees would help. Had they not already sent special seed potatoes, the corn grain that grew with practically no water? And was it not true that a 'pace-core' team was promised, to teach them how to bring the waters of the nearby river to their fields? Surely the Yankees would help!"

"But the time!" argued the elders, "They cannot possibly reach us in time!"

"Then perhaps, they will pass on our plea to someone who can!"

So, because there was no harm in hoping, a runner was dispatched to the nearest wire - station to send word of their plight to the mysterious Yankees. But, the days passed, and the crawling horror moved closer until advance scouts were evident in the outlying fields!!!! Their last hope gone, the people left the vil- lage, crossed the river, and camped on the rocky hills beyond. After the holocaust, they would recross the river and distribute them - selves throughout the land. Their proud vill- age would be no more, families would be split apart, and they would, ever after, work in the fields of others; living only to be alive.How- ever, the following morning revealed no crop damage, nor the next, or even the next. At the end of the third day, it was decided to re - cross the river and investigate this strange phenonmenon.

The corn stood tall and proud.Not a leaf or pod in the bean fields had been touched, & and none of the smaller vegtables plots were damaged. Further investigation disclosed that the advancing horde of ants had turned abrupt- ly just short of the fields; choosing instead, the uninhabited jungle. Also, no ants of any kind could be found. Even the small, everyday variety had vanished. But,that was not the strangest discovery. It was the children who found the giant footprints! The elders conclud -ed, a man must be at least ten feet tall to make such prints. The prints intercepted, then led the rarenous hord away from the village..! Even more amazing was the fact that the prints diminished in size as they proceeded to lead the ants away. Gradually becoming so tiny, that a reading glass was required to discern -- them.

No one in the entire village could ex -- plain, exactly what had happened. But,both young men and elders agreeg, that Yankees were a more mysterious breed than they had imagined.

-Bill Cantey-

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THE ACCURSED CODE continued...:
was/is rough. Careful attention should be paid to weapons and trappings. A good men-in-action, mag would have to be priced at about 35¢ to maintain the required high standards. I thought Gil Kane's "HIS NAME IS SAVAGE" was a great effort.

6- Science-Fiction/heroic fantasy. Left alone,E C would've done a terrific job. But, it's im - possible to produce under any code. A new idea rapidly becomes old when a barrier keeps stifl- ing the action. A 50¢ uncoded, illustrated mag- azine is the only hope. Heroic-Fantasy requires violent action and naked girls all over the place. Should be displayed at the top of the new -srack.

7- Crime & Horror might succeed if presented as an illustrated detective magazine, and placed beyond the reach of children. It should sell for 50¢ to a $1.00 from behind the counter.

8-Fanzines. The first move to re-educate the public should be an influx of professional fan- zines. Articles on the best of past and present comics would encourage the aforesaid communicat -ion between the generations.

Those are just some ideas --not perfect and not complete, just ideas. Express yours. Com- municate. The greatest thing a fan can do for the medium is to "infect" someone else with his "virus".

Comics can never die. But, they must pro -gress -- or stagnate!! And Marvel is the best hope for the best era, ever.

-Bill Cantey-

Fantastic Fanletters

New & Enlarged

Dear Gary:

Well, I've got a few spare minutes, so if you can put up with my typing, I think I'll comment on "FF" # 6*7 and 8*9!

On the whole, I find your zine quite well represented. What with Fantucchio, Cockrum and Grinage -- although the later sometimes displeases me, as with the cover to 6*7, your first double ish. The Black Bolt illo was quite finly rendered -- save for the shadowed portion on the floor there or whatever Black Bolt's standing on.Real -ly, I thought shadows were dark, entirely **black**. Not made up of big (well, in this case little) ugly dots that seem to follow a pattern. But then again, "A.U.G." may have decided to apply this type of zip-a-tone rather than just ink it in, as the rest of the cover did rely heavily on black area's. None-the-less, I would think a darker pattern, perhaps a zip pattern with the dots spaced more closely would have made a better effect -- but this is trivial -- let's move on.

The professional's you have contributing to "FF" are by far & wide some of my favorites -- Steranko heading the list. And I'm very glad to see he'll be represented in future issues.

Written material, I rather frowned upon, although the inter -- views I did read. Not only because I enjoy reading interviews, I also like to pick-up on the latest info in comics that are contained in them, and facts pertaining to the artists. BUT -- I find that Ye Old Editor, Mr. Groth, has a serious problem in asking questions for interviews. If you'd have re-read the Buscema Interview, as you're supposed to, (I can only conclude that you didn't, as I will explain here:), you'll notice that you've repeated yourself a number of times --in effect, just "padding" the Interview. Sure, it's nice to look at zine' ads and see that they've got a four page interview from such and such that we've all been waiting for -- but when it all comes out, and is read ---well, it could have easily been condensed to one half of its size. Period. Sal Buscema himself even realized you were repeating yourself, so much Gary, that he was forced to remark several of his answers "as I said before" or "previous" or some such thing. Get the message? I would think that an offset zine such as "FF" is costly, right? Well, all the more reason you should carefully edit your material. Yes, even Interviews, in order to save space. With this extra space, more features could be offered to the readers -- and beleive you me, it pays off in spades in the long run --TAKE HEED!

Glad to see that you're straying from the strict policy of only Marvel oriented-material, written leastwise. Although, I would think that the "Doc Savage" article was a fairly competant start -- textwise, the art could have been MUCH, MUCH better, really -- again a case of editorial neglect, sureley you could have had Grinage,Cock -rum, or someone else come up with a better illo of Doc than what you used.

Oh yes, I seem to have neglected to comment on Mike O'Neal's - art. Mike's a good buddy and a budding young artist -- all rolled

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FANTASTIC FANLETTERS continued...

into one. Although, he too, as everyone else does, lets out a few "below par" illos once in awhile -- such as the conglomeration or "dis-figuration" I detected on page 12 of issue 8-9. Again, editorial care should be taken to screen out these below par illos -- & for Pete-s sake, don't be afraid to return a contribut-ion or two! If any of your contributors get mad or hurt because you do, then they've no business contributing to any 'zine.YOU'RE spend-ing the money to put it out, so YOU have the final say as to what goes into it. In other words, you're spending your money foolishly or wisely -- which'll it be?

I'd say, in answer to the above,that you are doing quite a good job now as it is - more improvement is needed in certain areas (edit-ing for one, and the gathering of some good, substantial column writers or article writers, who write something other than MARVEL)!! But then every 'zine could stand improvement -- or it wouldn't be any fun in publishing one. It's the challenge that makes it fun.

In closing, Gary, I hope I haven't got-ten your dander up by my remarks - just tell-ing it as it is, or as I see it rather. Enjoy-ed the two double issues that I've got and I'd say "FF" has a pretty bright future.

MIKE ROBERTSON // 23614 S.E. 192nd STREET ////
MAPLE VALLEY, WASHINGTON // 98038 ////////////

(CONCERNING THE INTERVIEW WITH SAL: I DID RE-READ THE INTERVIEW -- THE INTERVIEW WAS TAPED WHICH MEANT I HAD TO RE-READ IT MANY, MANY TIMES. I FELT IN MOST CASES, THAT WITH EACH RE-DUNDANT QUESTION, SAL GAVE US MUCH MORE INFOR-MATION, THAN WAS "REQUIRED". THE TITLE LOGO AS MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, TURNED OUT, A MESS, WHICH WAS ALL MY FAULT. BELIEVE ME, I WON'T DO THAT SORT OF THING AGAIN. CONTARY TO YOUR OPINION, MOST OF THE FF'S READERS WANT MORE ARTICLES ON MARVEL AND LESS DEALING WITH OTHER SUBJECTS. THE VOTES HAVEN'T ALL BEEN TAL-LIED YET, BUT IT IS LEANING HEAVILY FOR MAR-VEL. MANY THANKS FOR YOUR "L.O.C.": IT'S LETT-ERS LIKE YOUR'S THAT KEEP MY HOPIN')

Dear Gary:

It's really amazing how far FF has come. I can hardly believe it's that same little xer-oxed 'zine that was so ugly. I think it's a-bout time you did away with the Marvelzine bit. Now, I have nothing against Marvel; they put out some really fine mags'; but just about ev-ery character Marvel has, has been written a-bout at least three or four times and anything more that's said is repeticious and boring. I can see you're trying to do that with the s/f stories, but it still looks verry much like a Marvelzine. Try to bring in Swords & Sorcery, horror, and other comic companies.F'rinstance, I don't believe many articles have been done on Bat Lash or Doug Wildey's art on TARZAN..! Well, now that the sermon's over, on to my com-ments on "FF" # 8*9...

The logical place to start is the cover, which Sal Buscema did nicely. The Club Memo's-- nothing exceptional, just a normal editor-ial. Fantucchio's pic of Magneto was just beau-tiful!! But then, that's only to be expected. The Interview with Sal Buscema was interesting. It's a good idea to get Interviews from the more obscure (no offense meant) or new artists and writers.

Next xomes The Search, which I attempted to read, but was forced not to finish due to lack of interest on my part. I did chance a-cross the name CRIMEMASTER. It happens that there was a villian that appeared in Spiderman many years ago also called CRIME MASTER. Watch that!

Now we get to my article, which has a sloppy illo'. A good portion of that smudged background (zip-a-tone) was added by someone else, as I didn;t shade a background on the original. I don't mind your shading in the or-iginal, but it understandably sort of irritat-es me when it's "blotched." As for the article itself -- Good Lord, did I make that many spelling errors??!! AYESHA was one of the more pleasing aspects of your 'zine. Even though Ayesha isn't an original character, Dave Cock-rum handled the story very nicely. And despite what you said previously, he did do the cen-ter spread, as I'm sure great quantities of your readers will remind you. What happens to the one by Tucker? Next issue, I suppose.

"Equality & Mr. Leiber", although not followed as well as it could have been, brings up a nice topic: the use of Negroes in comics. Apparently Stan is afraid he'll be linched if he shows a Negro as being a rioter or villian instead of a policeman (there are very, very, very few Negro policeman, despite their usage in the Marvel comics), and one really cannot blame him. After all, I certainly wouldn't want H. Rap Brown and his band of cronies af-ter my hide. I have no racial prejudice in me. I can really admire guys like Frank Robinson,-O.J. Simpson etc., but I feel that Negro's should be portrayed as being human beings. In other words, they're just as bad "as us whites" as well as being as good as us. You might say it's just a case of "telling it like it is."

Dwight Decker's article, though terribly

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short, was quite good. To me, the most exasperating thing a comic company can do is discon -- tinue a mag right in the middle of a story. And in a way, once a person (fictional of course), becomes a superhero, it is, in a way, one big continued story! Have you ever placed yourself in the place of a writer of a superhero series, or in the place of the superhero himself, and wonder how it could really end? The most real - istic way, of course, is that the hero is kill- ed. An alternate, used by Dwight,is that he re- tires. But what future does a superhero have?? His life is a constant struggle against death, and he always wonders if his next battle will be his last. Those villians aren't gonna' keep missing when they're shooting at you every day, and the villians get tougher every time. So the super-hero wonders. When will the law of per -- centages catch up with him? Just one tiny mis - take and he can wind up with a bullet in his brain...and then, if he's smart, he throws away his costume and settles down to normal life.But of course, superheroes aren't smart - - - their very profession is proof of that!

"A Look At The Future of Comicdom", I did not find too interesting. Lane spent too much time reviewing already known facts and not e -- nough time speculating.

"Col. Thar Kosis", I only glanced through but I caught the name "Kree". I don't want to sound like the voice of doom, but I hope you're getting permission for stuff like that, because if you're not, you're inviting a lawsuit.If you did get permission, you should say so. Ditto with AYESHA. The same advice goes for "The Self -Made Minuteman." Ah, now there was a story! It is too bad not as many fan-fiction writers are as good as Bill Cantey.

Well, that just about takes care of the issue. Only one more piece of advice, and then I'll shut up and go away. The typing! I know you're trying to make FF look nice with those even edges on both sides of the column, but you're making it incoherent instead. I would rather see something like t h i s or this than something like - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - t -his, if you get the point. At any rate, I would rather be able to read a 'zine easily than have both edges of the column even. Okay, now I'll shut up and go away.

GORDON MATTHEWS // 8 PERRY STREET ////// UNION CITY, PA., // 16438 //////////////////////////

(THAT'S THE BASIC TROUBLE, GORDON: FINDING SOME GOOD ARTICLES TO WRITE ABOUT MARVEL THAT HASN'T BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT AT LEAST A 100 TIMES. AS I MENTIONED IN MY ANSWER TO THE LAST LETTER I DID THE BACKGROUND ZIP-A-TONE-ING ON YOUR TITLE LOGO -- THE PRINTER SOMEHOW MANAGED TO- SMUDGE IT. THAT'S THE REASON WE HAD TO DISCON- TINUE "COL. THAR KOSIS"; BECAUSE OF TOM'S US - AGE OF MARVEL'S "TERMS" AND CHARACTERS. IN THE SELF MADE MINUTE-MAN, BILL DIDN'T USE THE AC - TUAL NAME OF A MARVEL CHARACTER. ABOUT THE TYP -ING, SEE "CLUB MEMO'S" PAGE.)

Dear Gary:

You needed comments on your 8*9 issue, & boy, am I going to give them to you. Don't ex- pect a gosh-wow-gee-whiz, complimentary "LOC", but rather a truthful, opinionated critique.

You committed a grave error by putting out ads and ready sheets saying certain things would happen, and then you disappoint people when they did not. Don't you read McGeehan's Helpful Hints? Your "beautiful color cover il- lustration of Dr. Strange by Sal Buscema" was good, but it wasn't in color. Your "second col -or cover by Dave Cockrum" not only wasn't in color, but wasn't even in the issue! Your"Four page interview with Sal Buscema (The first one printed in Fandom)" was six pages, and as Sal himself told you, you were the second 'zine to interview him, not the first. "He Who Rides The Nightwinds" didn't appear (in this issue anyways'). "Graphic Traffic" wasn't in the ish but your Dave Cockrum, double page spread was- --- though right inside the issue, you said it wouldn't be printed. I've heard of mix-ups but FF is in chaos.

The Magneto by John Fanticchio was prob - ably one of the best drawings to appear in fan -dom. It definitley should have been the cover or back cover at least. Don't get me wrong, I adored Sal Buscema's Avengers, and he is eas - ily the best find in years (in my books he ranks with Kirby, Romita, John Buscema, Colan, Roth etc. as the best artists at Marvel and comicdom), but his Doc Strange was only a fig- ure (no background) and should have been the back cover.

Your Interview with Sal Buscema was pret -ty good, but you failed as an editor. Not on- ly did you leave all the colocial dialogue in (which is the number one no-no in a written in -terview), but your questions were quite use - less. You can't print: "There weren't as many good companies, y'now like Marvel and D.C. and some of these other outfits, so I decided to go into advertising and it was a very nice car -eer, and I enjoyed it very much, but I still had this thing about comics in the back of my mind." What you should have said is something, like this: "Back then there weren't as many good companies like Marvel and D.C. etc., so I decided to go into advertising.

It was a very nice career, and I enjoyed it very much, though comics were still very much on my mind." Maybe this translation is a little too free, but I've interviewed an artist be-fore (only writers who write better grammat-ically) and I can't really say how far you should go in improving speech. However, you must admit, my version is far superior to your-s. In the interview, you spent far too much time on discussing his inking, with sickening, recurring questions. If this interview - was based on more intelligent questions, and was editted by a better editor (or at least by a better effort from you), it would have turned out much better than it was.

I really liked Smith's Daredevil. It was the best inked drawing in the whole mag. Cockrum's stuff look old; was it?

I have no comments on the xcience fic-tion, except that Fantastic Fanzine is not a Marvelzine as it is now, and it appears that the consequence is that no quality Marvelzine is left.

As for Lee's false impression of Negroes --what do you expect in a comic? Face it, Stan writes for the kiddies, not for you. Dwight's Bang article was refreshingly different, and though it was brief, I enjoyed it a lot. Lane missed the Future of Comicdom. Soon comics will be completely horror, as the superhero should die in the early 70's. (notice the horror tale in the latest Dareveil?). Who is this Bennett -- he's a good artist. Mike O'Neal's Goliath (?) was a highlight of the issue, al-though it was obviously influenced by a master artist's inking -- Ted White.

Conclusion: The increased page count helped. Now what you need is better material & better editting. Also, state whether you are leaving "Marvelzinedom" as it looks or not...! Keep up the exceptionally good work.

RON LIBERMAN // 63 FOUNTAINBLEAU DRIVE ////// WILLOWDALE, ONTARIO // 443 // CANADA /////////

Late Scoops

STRAIGHT FROM JIM STERANKO

Jim Steranko, has by no mean left the field of graphic illustration. Jim informs us that he has done one S&S cover for Lancer. The book is entitled "The Mighty Bar-barians", and will be out soon. The second is a Lancer SF novel entitled "Prisoners of The Sky". He has also been contacted by Atlantic Records to do Record Jacket's. If you like Jim's work on Lancer's paperback cov-ers, write Lancer, and I'm sure you'll see more of the same!! Also, watch for his cover on VAMPIRELLA # 3, (from Warren Publicat-ions). Next issue, we will print 3 photos of Jim, and to photo's of two of his paintings, held on exhibit at the convention. -Thanks for the bit of news, Jim!

SCOOP Bill Everett will take over the inking chores of THE MIGHTY THOR. Watch for it.

NOT BRAND ECHH WAS discontinued be-cause of poor sales. Roy Thomas, at the con said that the first 8 issues were s selling well, but the last three or four weren't!!!

Just a personal opinion, but I think that Not Brand Echh lost its popularity when it changed into its 25¢ size ----tried to pattern itself too much after Mad Maga-zine.--ed.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS.....

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE NEXT LETTER IS ONE OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO YOU -- THE READERS, SO PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY AND CONSIDER IT.:::

++

DEAR FANS:

I am writing this letter directly to you -- all of you; for it concerns each and every one of us. Yes, from the Bullpen right down to the lowliest comic fan. I believe most, if not all of you, will be quite interested in what I have to say, and I sincerely hope that you will give a great amount of consideration, on what I have to propose. But first, let me lead up to the point::

A short time ago, I received a letter from a serviceman stationed in Germany. Portions of that letter are as follows:

"Dear Pat: I was sitting here thinking if people really wrote to Marvel Comics or if they

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS:::::: continued...

just made up those letters. The answer to your letter is correct. My freind and I came into the Army together and when we got through with basic training, that was the last time I saw him.Now I am in Germany and he is in Viet Nam. So that is the way things go..."

He then went on, trying to convince me that I would be better off to stay in school (which wasn't needed), and that's what got to me. I began to think how lonely it must be for men, seperated from family and freinds, who must serve their country. Of course, he was interested in something that I could answer; but there was more to it than that. Pfc Mark Garrison had learned from experience, and tried to pass that knowledge onto another..! Now this, in a way is a shame. It's a shame that they do so much for us, when we do so little for them.

This is my request, so to speak. I believe that it is about time that we (fandom) actually do do something. I propose that we begin a "subscription fund", so that once each month, we may send a free subscription of a 12¢ Marvel mag to a selected serviceman. Each issue of the FF would announce the name(s) chosen for current months.

How about it, Fans? It makes no difference as to what your political beliefs may be, I only wish to help a fellow man witness a brighter day once each month. Fandom would finally be doing something constructive -- something we could be proud of. Those of you who are interested, and I hope that's all of you, simply send a measly one dollar ($1.00) per mon th, so that we may always have a full "kitty" for subscriptions. Records of your monthly contributions will be kept. So, please send your hard earned buck to me (not Gary)at: 1206 Pontiac Avenue // Cranston, R.I. // 02920. Thanks for listening to my sob story.

Respectfully, PAT JANSON.

"Triton"

(GARY HERE -- THAT'S ONE OF THE BEST IDEA's TO COME AROUND IN A LONG, LONG TIME, PAT. HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME SLIGHT ALTERATIONS IN YOUR "PLANS": FIRST OF ALL, I THINK THAT WE (OR RATHER YOU), SHOULD TAKE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 25¢ UP TO "..." FOR OUR "SUBSCRIPTION KITTY". AND JUST TO START THE BALL ROLLING, I'LL CONTRIBUTE $5.00 TO OUR SUBSCRIPTION FUND. ALL THE NAMES OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTE MONEY FOR THIS CAUSE WILL BE PLACED AT THE END OF "FANTASTIC FANLETTERS" WITH THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THIS PARTICULAR PERSON HAS CONTRIBUTED. WE WILL ALSO PRINT THE NAME(S) OF THE PERSON(S) (SERVICEMEN) SELECTED, TO RECEIVE THIS SUBSCRIPTION TO A MARVEL MAGAZINE. PLUS HIS FULL ADDRESS. ALSO, REMEMBER THAT THE MONEY YOU SEND FOR THIS "ACTIVITY" IS ONLY PART OF WHAT YOU CAN DO -- THESE BRAVE GUY'S OVER THERE LIKE TO RECEIVE MAIL, I'M SURE, SO PLEASE SEND THEM A LETTER -- START UP A CORROSPONDENCE WITH THEM. MAKE THEIR DAY A LITTLE BRIGHTER. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU OUT THERE WILL SEND IN AT LEAST A QUARTER -- ALSO, TRY TO GET YOUR FREINDS TO CONTRIBUTE. LET'S MAKE THIS ONE OF THE BIGGEST SUCCESS'S EVER!!!!)

QUOTES FROM THE READERS (To The Editor)

...As far as the FF's name goes, Fantastic Fanzine suits me fine; any Marvelite should be able to recognize the parallel to the Fantastic Four. However, I do think something should be done about the name and content of your nesletter, The Bombshell Bulletin. I think it's getting to be obvious that the newsletter is in a slump, which if allowed to continue, will spell its doom. I suggest that the BB be changed into an extension of the FF; a feature 'zine printed between issues of FF with up-to-nimute news from FF headquarters (like the FF EXTRA you had as a supplement to ish 6*7), a fanzine review, news scoops that cannot wait for the next FF, polls, etc. Waddya say, Gary? -- JIM WILSON. (REFER TO "CLUB MEMO'S PAGE" -ed)

...As for The Sarn Federation, it's the worst case of open plagiarism I've ever run across! I don't claim that my heroes are the most original but at least I take pains to make their characterization as different as possible from similar heroes! Crawford's use of the Skrull, Kree,Aakon and other Marvel races to fit the story into the readers past experience is commendable, but I hope for his sake that he dot Marvel's permission first. As for The Sarn Federation itself, it is merely a glorified Star Trek Federation & he even uses their terminology: Mind Fusion (ala Spock), "beam down", not to mention the resemblance of the Parallax to the Enterprise (capabilities, not appearance)! Although, not the most original story I've ever read, it was interesting.. ...perhaps because of it's very unoriginality)!-- ROBERT KOWALSKI. (REFER TO "CLUB MEMO'S PAGE" FOR REASON OF IT'S DISCONTINUATION -ed).

Some say that the FF's present name sounds "egotistical" or "childish". My comment to them would be that even if this is true, does it sound any more "egotistical" or "childish" than the new name for MARVEL'S COLLECTOR'S ITEM CLASSICS?After all, isn't Marvel the very basis of the FF? I say if Marvel can call a comic MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS, then we should be able to call our 'zine,the FANTASTIC FANZINE and be proud to be assosiated with it. -KENNETH KRAFT.

With writing, and drawing talents like Dave Cockrum's, he might be the FF's answer to Jim Steranko. -TOM CRAWFORD.

...my favorite article is the interview and if it is at all possible, I'd like to see an interview in every ish of FF. Prodom is too far apart from Fandom to keep up a "peacefull co-existance", and the best way I know for us to get to know about the pro's is through interviews. Keep 'em comin'. -DUFFY VOHLAND.

HE WHO RIDES THE NIGHT WINDS!
Ghost Rider
Dave Cockrum

ANT-MAN
Dave Cockrum